MARCH, 1995

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magazine

The Independent Amusement Machine Industry Magazine

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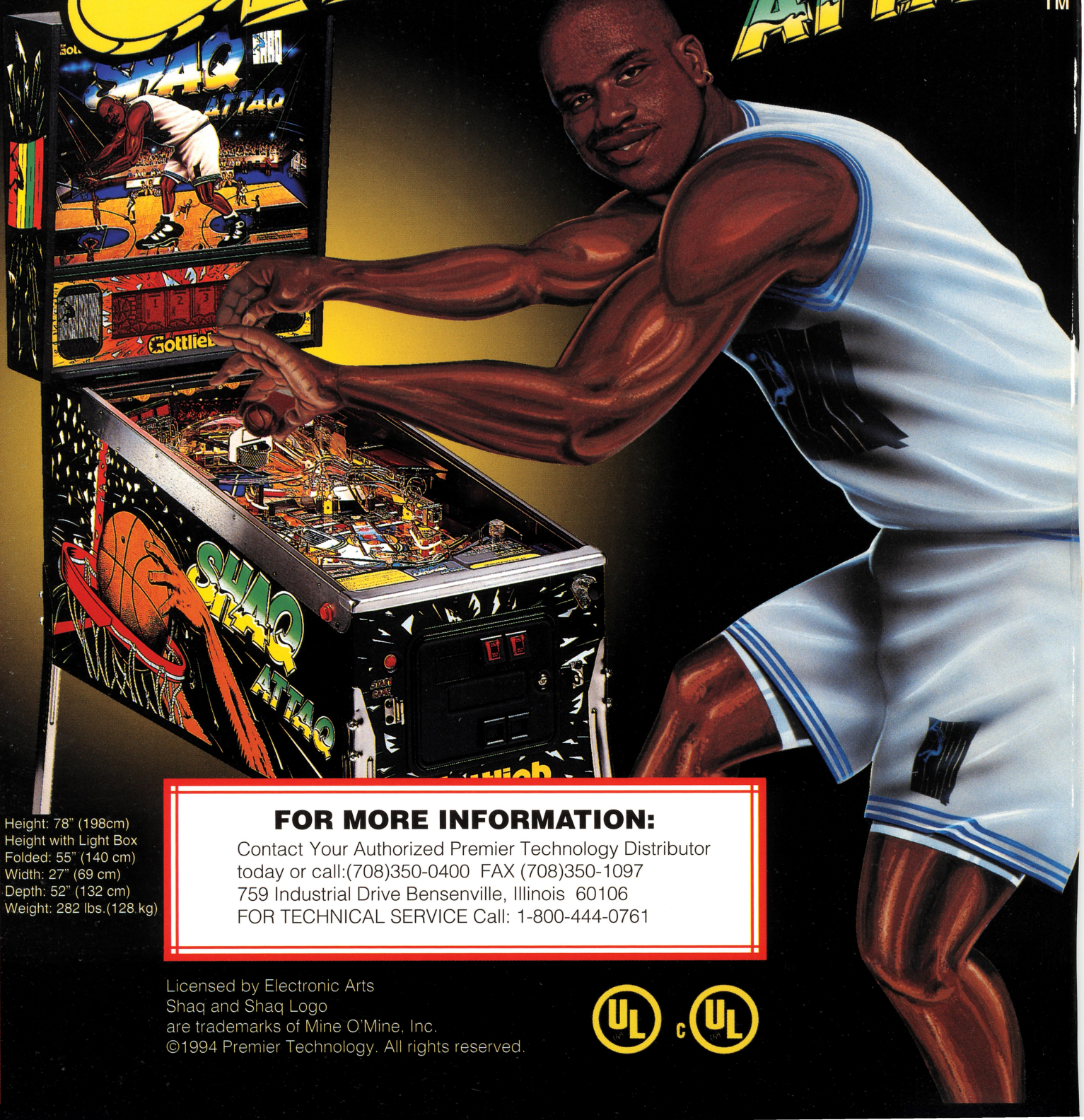

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UL c UL

UNITED KINGDOM

ATEI SETS PACE FOR 1995 WITH RECORD ATTENDANCE - IMA OK TOO

No one ever expected ATEI '95 to be a 'dud', but even the big London show's greatest admirers would have been hesitant in predicting that over 30,000 amusement industry people would attend the three day event and set new records for the number of both UK and international visitors.

If there was ever any doubt that ATEI is the world's #1 International Trade Show, they were clearly squashed by 4.00PM on Thursday 26th January when ATEI '95 closed, amid unprecedented demands from both operators and exhibitors that the show be increased to a four day event as early as could be arranged.

Final figures are not available as we go to print, but the number of international visitors to ATEI seems certain to be over 5000 and exhibitors were in consensus that the quality of buyer present was the best they had ever experienced at any show they had attended.

UK operators who came to Earls Court with grave concerns for their future following the recent Government slug of a new tax, were soon caught up in the swing of things and the general attitude noticeably lifted with each passing hour.

By shows end they were confident that BACTA, the big British association would be successful in at least lessening the severity of the tax and many went on a buying spree.

The only slight 'downer' at ATEI was the relatively small quantity of new video product, but buyers soon realised that what was on show was of very good quality and they reacted accordingly.

The big movers at ATEI were undoubtedly redemption games despite the fact that they are not big in Britain where AWP's and SWP's have a stranglehold on the market.

A huge showing of redemption product that seen almost every American and Japanese manufacturer represented as well as the British, was well appreciated and we believe the buying was of equal standard to the fine product shown

ATEI was a show for operators, an excellent show to start the year with almost every coin-op product currently on the market on display.

Across the channel and along a bit, Frankfurt's IMA was also a huge success though the wide open spaces of the huge Frankfurt Exhibition Centre ensured IMA never had the 'buzz' of ATEI or appeared as frantically busy.

The overlap of two days with ATEI also severely affected international attendance.

But buying was reported to be excellent and the now, very positive German market is obviously lifting the whole of Europe.

◆ HUGE BUYING

An example of the buying at ATEI and IMA is shown in the report that Premier Technology, the makers of Gottlieb Pinballs has had to extend the production run of Shaq Attaq by almost a month to accommodate the increased orders the shows generated.

Normally the extra production could be taken care of in the scheduled time span of the production run, but in this case the numbers were too great.

◆ HUGE BUYING

Deith Leisure who showed the top Sega games, Virtua Fighter 2, Sega Rally, etc as well as a host of other good product had to get more order books sent in by midday on the second day of ATEI

RENO

If in your spare time at Reno you want to have a flutter on the tables or slot machines, the 'little big city' is second only to Las Vegas in Nevada style gambling, the many Casinos cater for all class of gambler, high stakes or low and Casino staff are of the good natured Western variety.

Or if you're into history, you can trace the fascinating history of Reno the railroad town, the first trans American railroad joined up the East to West cross country link in Reno and there's some great tales about those early days.

Then again, if you fancy getting married, remarried (or even divorced), you can do it all in Reno, with glitz or without.

There's also the museums like that which houses the famous Harrahs Automobile Collection, there's the Heavenly Valley/South Lake Tahoe air tram trip to the incredible Fleischmann Planetarium, it just goes on and on.

And if you just want to see some of the most beautiful country on the planet at this time of year, drive out into the High Sierras, get out of the car and just look across the snow capped peaks and down into the valleys. I guarantee you that in moments you are visualising cowboys and Indians racing across the valley floor, straight out of a Zane Grey novel that you read many years ago.

Reno's top stuff, definitely the place to be on the 23rd of this month

UNITED STATES

SELL OUT IN THE HIGH SIERRAS AS ACME CONTINUES TO EXPAND

Each year it get's bigger and each year it get's better and 1995 is no different as the "Sold Out" sign goes up for ACME '95 to be held in Reno later this month

Free to operators attending the show, the ACME Operators Cocktail Party has become one of the best social gatherings of the year in the USA

With all available space sold out, ACME '95 promises to be one of the biggest expositions of coin operated games and equipment staged, as manufacturers and operators from all over the USA and from many parts of the world gather for the first big American show of the year.

And Reno is a first class venue, referred to as "The Biggest Little City in the World", this little old gambling town with the rich railroad history, that's perched up in the magnificent High Sierra ranges, is as good a place as you'd want, to spend a few days for a Trade Show.

ACME '95 will be the biggest ACME ever, up more than 12% in floor space sold over last years event in Rosemont and as always it's chock full of special events, innovative ideas and good informative seminars.

Sponsored by the AAMA and organised by William T Glasgow Inc, ACME this year will introduce a Voucher Program for all attendees. On registering, visitors will be given a Coupon Book that will allow them to make substantial savings on a wide range of goods exhibited at the show.

There's also a Treasure Hunt that will see visitors picking up valuable prizes each day of the show.

Randy Fromm, the well known technical wiz has a special area on the show floor where he will conduct ongoing technical sessions for technicians and service personnel with displays, lectures, question and answer sessions and special presentations.

There's also an excellent Seminar program over the three days that collectively will cover almost every area of the coin-op business, and visiting spouses are also catered for with an interesting Spouse Program.

And the innovative ACME feature that has met with a great response since instigated, the Operators Cocktail Party, is on again this year and will be held at the Reno Hilton on the opening night, March 23rd.

All in all ACME '95 promises to be a great industry event allowing operators the opportunity to see all the latest equipment, to socialise with their peers and to gain the vital information that will enable them to keep abreast of this very fast moving industry

See you in Reno

UNITED STATES

BOOK NOW FOR AMOA EXPO, NEW ORLEANS

Those wishing to exhibit at AMOA Expo'95 to be held in New Orleans, September 21st to 23rd should book now to ensure they get the space they want.

Contact Fred Newton at AMOA headquarters on +1 312 245 1021 or by fax on +1 312 245 1085

SPOTLIGHT ON JAPAN

KOBE EARTHQUAKE

Like all in the industry we were shocked at the terrible death toll that resulted from the Kobe earthquake and we would like to add our condolences to the Japanese people who suffered such devastating losses.

In the Kobe and Hanshin districts there are many amusement machine manufacturers, distributors and exporters, as well as many amusement centres, but even now with the incredible damage to transport and communications it's difficult to obtain any real details of damage and loss.

Being a rich country, Japan will soon rebuild the many damaged buildings, roads, bridges, etc that were destroyed, but the human life lost at Kobe and surrounding districts can never be replaced and we offer our heartfelt sympathy to all those who lost family, relations and friends in this terrible, natural disaster.

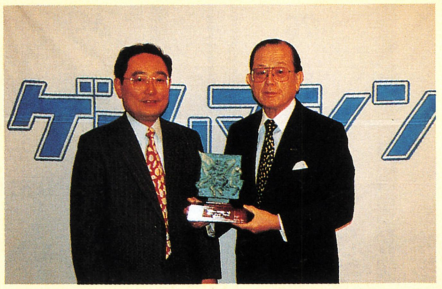
We are a long way away and we sometimes have our differences, but our hearts are with you as you mourn your dreadful losses

Jack Rodios - CBI Magazine

1994 AWARDS

Game Machine Magazine presented their annual awards in late January and they went to the "Big Two" of video games, Namco and Sega. The winners were, Namco's *Ridge Racer* (Dedicated game) and *Puyo Puyo* (Conversion game)

Puyo Puyo is a *Tetris* type puzzle game that has been exceptionally strong in the Japanese market for almost two years, but unlike *Tetris* which done well everywhere, *Puyo Puyo* hasn't been rated in any other country. Second in this category was *Super SFII Turbo.*



Game Machine's Masumi Akagi presenting Namco chief, Masaya Nakamura with the 'Dedicated Game Award' won by Ridge Racer.

CURRENT CHARTS

Though the market was somewhat subdued in the wake of the Kobe disaster, Sega's *Virtua Fighter 2* leapt to the head of both the conversion game and the dedicated game charts in Japan last month and unless something very good arrives on the scene, we'd be inclined to think it will reside at the top for an extended period.

Namco's *Ace Driver* was a very creditable second in the dedicated sector, less than a point behind *VF2*, and the company's *Ridge Racer Twin* was only .1 behind that game in third place.

A surprise for operators in many parts of the world would be *Daytona Twin's* 7th placing, almost a full point behind the third placed game.

Sports Fishing continues to show that it's got 'legs' by hanging in at #4, only .5 of a point behind *VF2*

In the conversion sector, *Puzzle Bobble* was a good second, splitting *Virtua Fighter 2* and the original *Virtua Fighter* which continues to hold players interest, while Namco's *Tekken* debuted in the charts at #4, just a whisker behind. Capcom's *X-Men* opened at #5 with *Samurai Shodown 2* close behind.

Demolition Man headed the Pinball chart from *Star Trek* and *World Challenge Soccer*

THE FORCE OF KOBE

The pictures below give some idea of the force behind the Kobe earthquake.

The top picture shows a building which at first glance, is obviously damaged, but seemingly erect. In reality the ground floor which housed a large Taito arcade, has been whipped from under it and the building is a total write off.

The middle picture gives a glimpse of the inside of the arcade showing the splattered machines and the lowered ceiling and the bottom picture shows another arcade in Kobe which has gone over sideways, but is being propped up by the building beside it

Pictures courtesy of Game Machine Magazine

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FACT:

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Tellin' it like it is

With Jack Rodios

Of all the problems that this industry faces like the £250 per machine tax in Britain, the Sega action in Australia, the parallel situation in the US with the 'sunset clause' coming into play at the end of the year, Government greed, and a host of other things, I still feel the biggest problem in the industry is getting the players back to our machines.

Some scoff at that, maintaining that the players are still there, but the games aren't, and they may have something in that, but everything we've seen in our travels points to a definite erosion of the amusement machine player base.

Not only are players not spending as much on amusement games, there's doesn't appear to be the number of players going into the arcades today as there was a short time ago.

Sure in many countries the FEC concept has taken custom from conventional arcades and possibly street sites, but I tend to think we are being 'out-marketed' by the many other forms of entertainment that we are in direct competition with.

The dollar that's spent at the cinema or Basketball game comes out of basically the same pocket as the dollars spent on playing amusement machines. Maybe we have to go out there and chase that dollar a bit harder, really sell our products to the players, what do you think?

Share your thoughts with us, lets put this problem on the agenda and not treat it as just another cyclical slump.

****

Twelve months ago at Rosemont's ACME, we launched Cash Box International magazine and here we are heading for Reno to start our second year of publication with this issue.

It's been a bit of a rat race, 150,000 air miles, 12 frantic deadlines, all sorts of drama but I reckon I've latched on to the best job in the world and wouldn't be dead for a million bucks.

Thanks, and I mean it, to all the people in this great industry who have made it possible with their support and encouragement for us to achieve what we have, 12 months is not a long time by any means, a mere drop in the bucket, but in the case of getting a new magazine started, the first 12 months is obviously the hardest and we know we could never have done it without your help.

I hope you've enjoyed Cash Box as much as we have enjoyed putting it together, and I hope you keep enjoying it, as we will always be looking at ways to improve and develop the magazine as we go along.

From Jane, Sidah, Barbara and myself.....Thanks, we owe you.

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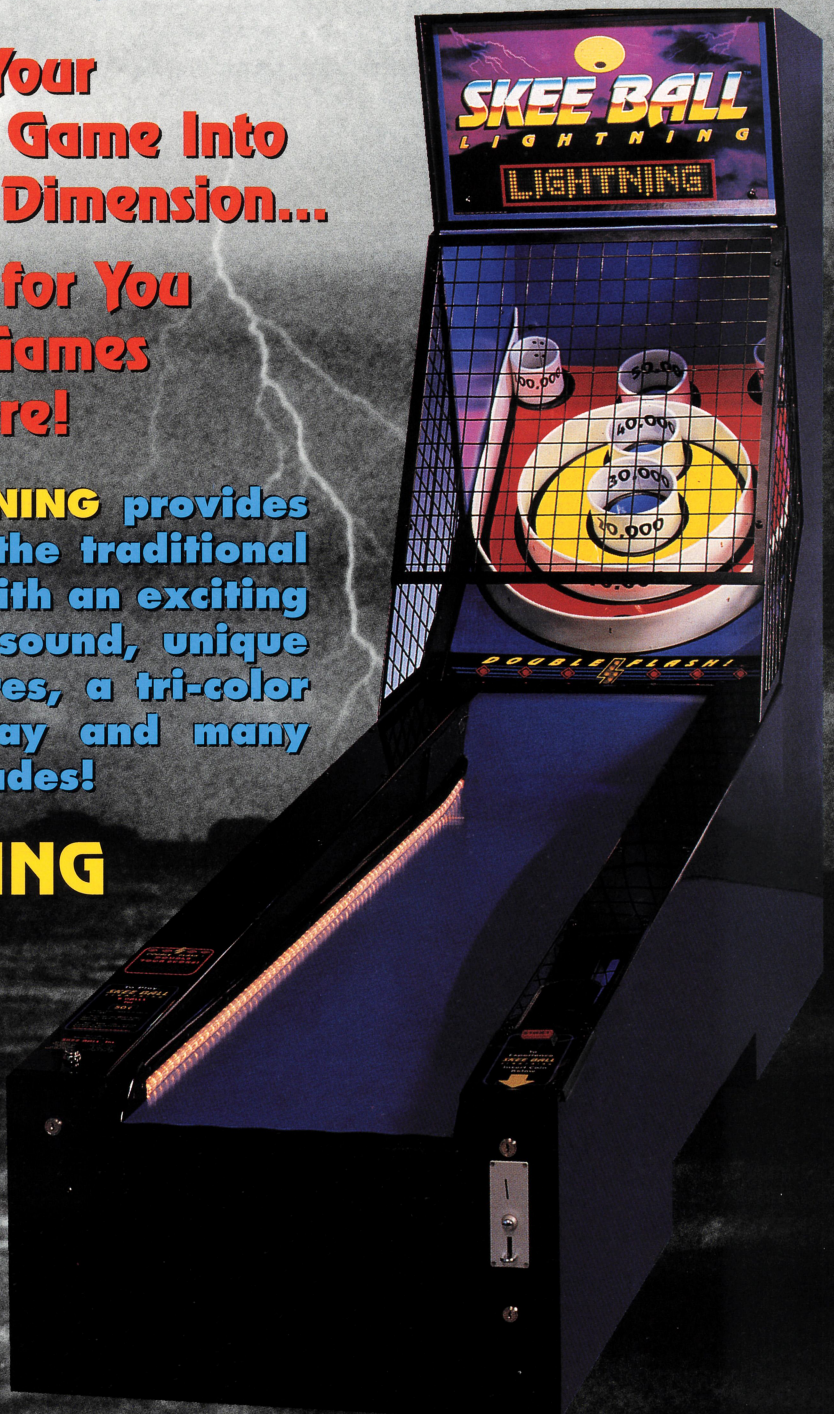

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Lo digo tal cuales

De todos los problemas que confronta esta industria, como el impuesto de 250 libras esterlinas por máquina en la Gran Bretaña, el litigio Sega en Australia, la situación similar de "sunset clause" (cláusula sunset) en E.U., que entró en juego a finales de año, la avaricia del Gobierno, y un sin fin de otras cosas, sigo creyendo que el mayor de ellos es recuperar los jugadores de nuestras máquinas.

Algunos se burlan de esto, y mantienen que los jugadores están aún ahi, pero no los juegos, y puede que haya algo de eso, pero todo lo que hemos visto en nuestros viajes, señala un desgaste definitivo de las máquinas electrónicas, en cuanto a jugadores. No solamente los jugadores no están gastando tanto en los juegos electrónicos, sino que hoy en dia no parecen frecuentar las galerias en el número de poco tiempo atrás.

Seguramente en muchos paises el concepto "FEC" se ha llevado a los clientes de las galerias convencionales y posiblemente de los puestos de la calle, pero me inclino a pensar que hemos sido desbancados del mercado, por las muchas otras formas de entretenimiento con las cuales competimos directamente.

El dólar que se gasta en el cine o en el partido de Pelota, sale básicamente del mismo bolsillo que los dólares que se gastan en las máquinas tragamonedas. Quizás, tengamos que ir allá fuera y perseguir ese dolar con un poco más de empeñio, vender nuestros productos a los jugadores, ¿no creen? Compartan sus ideas con nosotros, incluyamos este problema en la agenda y no lo tratemos sólo como otra depresión ciclica.

****

Hace doce meses publicamos la revista "Cash Box International", en el "ACME", de Rosemont y aqui estamos camino de Reno para comenzar nuestro segundo año de publicación con esta edición. Ha sido una carrera un poco desenfrenada, 150,000 millas aéreas, 12 plazos de tiempo enloquecedores, todo tipo de dramatismos, pero creo que me he adherido al mejor trabajo del mundo y no lo abandonaria ni por un millón de dólares. Gracias, de verdad, a todas las personas de esta gran industria que han hecho posible con su apoyo y aliento el que hayamos conseguido lo que tenemos, 12 meses no es mucho tiempo, como quiera que se mire, una gota de agua en el mar, pero cuando se trata de poner en marchar una revista nueva, los primeros 12 meses son, obviamente, los más duros y sabemos que nunca lo hubiésemos podido lograr sin su ayuda.

Espero que hayan disfrutado de "Cash Box" tanto como nosotros disfrutamos acoplándola, y espero que sigan disfrutando de su lectura, ya que nosotros siempre estaremos buscando los medios para mejorar la revista sobre la marcha. De parte de Jane, Sidah, Bárbara y de mi parte.... Gracias, les estamos en deuda.

Das Kind beim Namen nennen

Trotz aller Schwierigkeiten, denen sich diese Industrie gegenuebersieht, wie die t250 Steuer pro maschine in grossbritanien, die Handlungen der Sega in Australien, die parallele Lage in den USA wo der sogn "sunset clause" (ein befristender Paragraph) am Ende des Jahres zur Anwendung kommen wird, der Habgier der Regeirung und einer Anzahl anderer Dinge, habe ich immer noch das Gefuehl, dass das groesste Problem in der Industrie ist, die Spieler wieder an die Maschinen zurueckzuholen.

Mance spotten darueber und behaupten, dass die Spieler noch immer da sind, aber die Spiele fehlen, und es kann durchaus etwas daran sein, aber alles, was wir auf unsern Reisen gesehen haben zielt auf eine definitive Erosion der Spielerbasis fuer Vergnuegungsmaschinen.

Die Spieler geben nicht weniger fuer die Vergnuegugnsmaschinen aus, es scheint auch nicht die Anzahl Spieler in den Arkaden wie noch vor kurzem zu geben.

Sicherlich, in vielen Laendern hat das FEC Prinzip Kundschaft aus den gewoehnlichen Arkaden und moeglicherweise den Stellen an den Strassen weggenommen, aber ich glaube eher, dass wir beim Vermarkten von vielen anderen Formen von Unterhaltung, mit denen wir in direktem Wettbewerb stehen, ueberholt worden sind.

Der Dollar, der im Kino oder beim Basketball-Spiel ausgegeben wird, kommt imgrunde aus derselben Tasche wie der Doller, der fuer das Spielen der Vergnuegungsmaschinen ausgegeben worden ist. Vielleicht sollten wir rausgehen und dem Dollar etwas mehr nach-jagen, unsere Produkte richtig verkaufen, was denken Sie?

Teilen Sie uns Ihre Gedanken hierueber mit, lassen Sie uns dieses Problem auf die Tagesordnung setzen und es nicht nur wie einen weiteren zyklischen Rueckgang behandeln.

****

Vor zwoelf Monaten bei Rosemont's ACME haben wir Cash Box International Magazin gestartet, und heir gehen wir auf Reno los, um das zweite Veroeffentlichungsjahr mie dieser Ausgabe zu beginnen.

Es ist eine ziemliche Jagd gewesen, 150.00 Flugmeilen, 12 fieberhafte Termine, alle moeglichen Dramen, aber ich glaube, ich habe den besten Job in der Welt an der Hand und wuerde ihn nicht fuer eine Million hergeben.

Dank, und ich meine es wirklich, all den Leuten in dieser grossartigen Industrie, die mit ihrer Unterstuetzung und Ermutigung es uns ermoeglicht haben, zu erreichen, was wir erreicht haben. 12 Monate ist auf keinen Fall eine lange Zeit, nur ein Tropfen im Eimer, aber in dem Fall, wo ein neues Magazin gestartet wird, sind die ersten 12 Monate augenscheinlich die schwersten, und wir wissen, dass wir es niemals ohne Ihre Hilfe geschafft haetten.

Ich hoffe, Sie haben sich an Cash Box so sehr erfreut, wie wir uns daran erfreut haben, es zusammenzustellen, Und ich hoffe es erfreut Sie auch weiterhin, da wir immer nach Wegen fuer die Verbesserung und Weiterentwicklung des Magazins suchen werden.

Von Jane, Sidah, Barbara und mir selber, Dank - wir stehen in Ihrer Schuld.

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◆ RISE OF ROBOTS NOW READY TO SHIP

Bell Fruits video fighting game, Rise of the Robots is now ready to ship. The finished product was shown at ATEI and IMA and the big UK company were delighted with the response of operators who played the game.

◆ STARGATE AMAZES THE SHADOW FAZES

The movie Stargate continues to do extraordinary business at the box office in America and is now opening around the world with high expectations of repeating it's American success.

If you think the movies good.....wait till you see the Pinball, it's a "Ripper"

On the other hand The Shadow Pinball is not too bad, but don't waste good money on the movie it's a real shocker and strictly for insomniacs when all other attempts to get to sleep have failed.

◆ KONAMI NOT IDLE

Konami, the once prolific PCB game maker have been very quiet of late and many have wondered if the company had a problem.

No problems other than a disappointing year in home video games and the word is strong that the company hasn't been idle, it appears they are going flat out to develop a swisho graphic system that will put them right up there with Namco and Sega

UNITED STATES

FORMER WILLIAMS HEAD TO LEAD GAMESTAR AS DEBUT PINBALL GETS CLOSER

Former Williams chief Mike Stroll has returned to the industry after ten years to head up GameStar as the Japanese company owned by Capcom and Romstar approaches the release of their first Pinball game.

Stroll will take over from Romstar head Takahito Yasuki who has been watching over the new company in it's building stage, and is expected to a strong force in the development and marketing of the company's products.

Though the company is pretty tight lipped about their first Pinball offering, it now seems certain that they will not have Pinball product available for ACME in Reno as was believed to be the case, but it is known that the company will have another redemption game, titled *Fortune Falls* to go with their very successful *Goofy Hoops* and it is expected that they will have a prototype Pinball for the Reno show, if not for public viewing, then certainly for private.

Ed Schmidt & Frank Lowney

Somewhere in there is also the new digitised Street Fighter game that was filmed with the movie. Word is that this game is being developed at the big Arlington GameStar factory and is now nearing completion.

When passing through Chicago in January we had a brief discussion with veteran Pinball man Ed Schmidt who now heads up the field service department at GameStar with former Australian operator Frank Lowney, and though they couldn't tell much, the one message that came through loud and clear was that GameStar are extremely committed, and very confident they can make a top quality Pinball at an affordable price.

That's got to be good.

UNITED STATES

AGO MENSAH GOES INTO BUSINESS

Ago Mensah, leading sales executive of RH Bellam, in the international market for many years, has left the New York based company to start his own business of supplying coin-op amusement equipment to the international operator market.

Ago Mensah

One of the most knowledgeable men in the industry on international markets, Ago is confident that he can supply any product that buyers from any country may require and he seems sure to quickly establish himself in what is a difficult market.

Ago will be operating with a partner under the name of *Ago's International* and will be based in New York, he will be attending all major trade shows and can be contacted on +1 718 793 5209 or by fax on +1 718 261 0266 at any time.

THAILAND

LEGALISING OF COIN MACHINES IMMINENT

The Thai Government is said to be very close to lifting the restrictions on coin operated amusement machines which if correct will open up a bonanza for local and foreign coin-op companies.

Thailand has one of the healthiest economies of all the developing nations and for the first time in history, a large portion of it's citizens have disposable income that could find it's way to coin-op amusements.

Sensing success with the Government, the country's largest operator, Galaxy are endeavouring to form a trade association in an effort to bring in the legal video and merchandising games in a manner that's of most benefit to the industry.

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JAPAN - AUSTRALIA

SEGA GIVE OZ COMPANY MONOPOLY ON NEW RALLY GAME

Despite walking into a minefield with their decision to support Avel Pty Ltd in their efforts to enforce exclusive rights in the Australian market and stop parallel imports, it appears that Sega have now given the Australian company exclusivity of distribution on their latest game, *Sega Rally Championship* which can only put them further "off-side" with Australian operators.

Going on the previously reported sales of *Daytona USA*, this decision could cost the big Japanese game maker sales of up to 250 units of the Rally game that many pundits believe could be every bit as good as *Daytona*, if the exclusivity can be enforced, though it's likely that whilever the matter is undecided by the Courts, parallel imports will continue.

At time of writing, Sega have failed to respond to any correspondence from the Australian industry, having not even shown the National association the courtesy of a reply to their letter of complaint..

Australian operators are finding it extremely difficult to understand why Sega are taking this course, the company currently has four of the best games ever made on the market in *Daytona, Virtua Cop, Virtua Fighter 2* and *Sega Rally*, they must be aware that even the raving ratbags who appear on the Oprah Winfrey show and tell the world how their wife ran away with the next door neighbours pet parrot, could sell these games in large numbers.

To give any one company a monopoly on that type of product defies reason when it can only cost Sega a heap of sales and put them in the middle of a public relations nightmare which they can't come out of unscathed.

The initial hearing on the so called copyright infringement is scheduled for February 16th, but the case is not expected to get down to the real meat of the matter for some months.

◆ RED ZONE A WILD RIDE

Jaleco's new driving game, Red Zone was completely overshadowed at ATEI by the big Sega and Namco games, but it's a wild old drive that will find buyers at the lower end of the market. Red Zone takes players onto the Tokyo Highway system and anyone who's been on that track knows that Kamikaze is not dead.

◆ MORTAL KOMBAT 3

It looks likely that Midway will release Mortal Kombat 3 either at ACME or soon after and there is also strong word of an MK Pinball to be released with the film

AUSTRALIA

TASMANIAN STAMP DUTY CASE LOST

It's been verified in an appeal to the Tasmanian Supreme Court on assessments made by the Commissioner of Stamp Duties, that the operation of amusement machines, placed in locations where the proprietor of those premises is paid a commission, is a *rental business* under the Stamp Duties Act 1931.

This means that Stamp Duty (read tax) has to be paid on the earnings of all amusement machines operated in the island state.

Three local operators, Erwin Boot, Mark Templar and Bruce Newton, with some financial assistance from the National AMOA fought the imposition of Stamp Duty, but the judgement handed down by Justice J Cox was a quite decisive document that leaves little hope of a successful appeal to a higher Court.

This case has been going on for some years and with this judgement there is the possibility that the Stamp Duty bogy could now be raised on the mainland states.

JAPAN

KANEKO SCOOP DRIVER KIT MARKET WITH LINKED MILLE MIGLIA

Kaneko gave the conversion game sector a boost when they released their linked version of *Mille Miglia (Great 1000 Mile Rally)* titled *Mille Miglia 2* at ATEI in London.

This sequel that will link up to four screens is a budget priced conversion on the company's AX system board that means owners of the original game or any other AX game only have to buy the programme to enjoy the benefits of a linked driving game.

Mille Miglia 2 has also had a lot of work done on it in enlargement of the graphics, speed and handling and though the game can still be played with a joystick, it's well worth placing in a sit down driving cabinet with steering wheel, etc as this update is a much more complete game than the initial version.

Kaneko would appear to have stolen a march on the Spanish company Gaelco which were expected to release a linked *World Rally* at ATEI or IMA, and should tot up some excellent sales in the game starved, conversion market.

AUSTRALIA/SOUTH EAST ASIA

VILLAGE NINE LEISURE SET TO EXPLODE INTO WORLD COIN-OP ARENA

In July 1994, Village Nine Leisure announced a $100 million plan to develop innovative "out-of-home" entertainment complexes throughout Australia, Asia and the Pacific Rim.

There were three types of location to be opened, the "Intencity" Indoor Theme Parks in major Shopping/ Cinema malls, "World Live!" venues for adult entertainment and "Hide & Seek" centres for little kids.

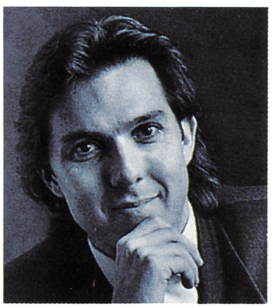
The first "Intencity" which incorporates a "Hide & Seek" centre opens in Sydney this month at Hurstville.

When a company sends out a glossy, annual report with full financial details without any solicitation, it's a real good bet that they are travelling pretty cool and very pleased with what they are doing and that surely seems to be the case with Village Roadshow Limited, 50% owners of Village Nine Leisure.

The Village Roadshow report was in fact, so impressive that if there had been any money lying around, we'd have rushed out and bought some stock.

The Village Nine, World Live centres for adults will be fitted with "Wide World of Sports" bars

Look out for these blokes and not just in Australia, Village Road-show Ltd is already a world force in most types of entertainment, and we tend to think they are just getting warmed up.

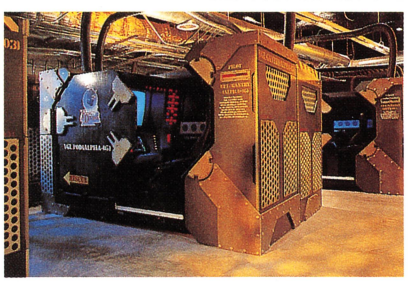


Village Nine Leisure chief, Gary Berman

Their tie-up with Kerry Packer's Nine Network in Village Nine Leisure seems certain to add to the lustre of the company as their Intencity indoor theme parks start coming on line in the middle of this month with the first opening at Hurstville, a southern Sydney suburb.

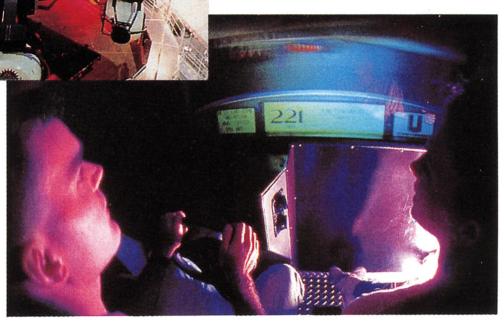
Nothing has been spared, least of all, money, to make the Intencity centres and the World Live!, adult centres, the ultimate in modern day entertainment and they seem certain to cause a lot of 'rethinking' in the Australian arcade sector which has largely stayed with conventional coin-op machines.

The company has scoured the world for the best attractions that money can buy, many of them like *Battle Tech* and *The Chameleon* being in the multi million dollar price range and Village Nine Leisure's CEO, Gary Berman is confident that the concept will not only work, but *"capture the lions share of the burgeoning (FEC) market"* and hold it.



Battle Tech (VR) centres will just one of the Intencity Indoor Theme Park's attractions

As well as the six or eight centres they will open in Australia this year, Village Nine Leisure will open Intencity centres in Singapore and Malaysia and are currently finalising negotiations on sites in Taipei, Auckland, and the USA.



The multi million dollar Chameleon (above) looks like a simple 'Octopus' type ride, but inside the capsules (left) it's as hi tech as you can get

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◆ GULF SHOW

Seldom has a new show got the response that the Gulf Leisure Parks & Fun Centre Show to be held in Dubai this month has received.

Most world manufacturers believe the Middle East is an area capable of great coin-op growth and are going all out to have a good display of their products in Dubai.

UNITED STATES

HIGH PRICES, MEDIOCRE GAMES HURT WILLIAMS/BALLY

There's a strong suggestion in the United States that Williams recent price rise has completely backfired and the company will be forced to soon reduce the price of their Pinballs.

Buyers have apparently shown they are not one little bit impressed with the current price of Williams/Bally machines and are reportedly turning to other brands in quite large numbers.

Williams appear to have stuffed up somewhat in increasing their prices on what are, by the standards they set, mediocre games. One could say they have fallen on their own sword.

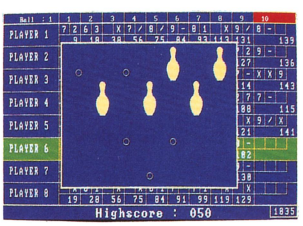
Even *Road Show* which is the pick of the current bunch can not handle Premiers *Shaq Attaq* and neither *The Flintstones, Corvette, Dirty Harry* or *The Shadow* warrant a price some 15% higher than it's competitors games.

Operators may be a lot of things, but they are not fools where a dollar is concerned, and though they may have accepted a higher price when Williams /Bally games were the clear cut top performers, they won't accept it on what the players market has determined are inferior games.

It would seem that unless Williams can come up with a really top game along the lines of *Addams Family* or *Star Trek* in what we believe are their next two titles, *Mortal Kombat 3* and *No Fear*, they are going to lose a lot more market share unless they get their prices down to a competitive level.

UNITED KINGDOM

DEITH ADD MONITORS TO BOWLEASY SYSTEM



UK company, Deith Leisure, suppliers of the BowlEasy Compact, 10 Pin Bowling Lanes are now making a new Monitor Display System available which will provide player and game information on colour monitors similar to full size 10 pin bowling lanes.

The monitor system was shown at ATEI where the compact BowlEasy showed it's fast becoming a popular choice for FEC operators who have found the system to be a good money spinner and a top attraction for families.

One of the UK's biggest resort operators Haven Leisure have just added 16 more lanes and are now operating 36 lanes as the central feature in the entertainment complexes of their top 9 resorts. The lanes are proving so popular, Haven Leisure have set up an inter resort "Strikes" club for BowlEasy players.

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UNITED STATES

NAMCO TAKE TEKKEN ON PROMOTIONAL TOUR

Players in Atlanta (pictured) and all other cities visited, gave the new game a very enthusiastic reception

In what turned out to be a brilliant promotion of their crack, new fighting game *Tekken*, the Namco USA sales and marketing team covered 12 cities in three days recently in a quick tour to introduce the game directly to players In association with local distributors and host amusement centres, Namco set up tournaments in the cities to be visited and heavily promoted the tour for weeks prior to the event. The results saw large crowds at the majority of the venues and some very competitive tournament play of a game that was equally new to all players.

Tekken is the first in a series of what Namco term, "high performance, low cost games" aimed at providing street and arcade operators with an affordable entry into the world of hi tech games using 3D textured polygon graphics and similar, that players are demanding these days.

The game just recently had a very successful first public showing to the industry at ATEI and IMA, where it was high up on everyone's list of good new releases and going on the response it got on the Namco promotional tour, seems set for good success in the general market.

There are tournament packages available in the US to operators wanting to run a *Tekken* Tournament which can be obtained from local distributors or Namco Sales Representatives.

◆ 3DO REAL GOING 64

The 3DO REAL, 32 bit home game system may not have reached the level of sales that was expected, but they've still sold a very creditable 500,000 units into the market in the past year.

Now comes news of a 64 bit system that the company will be releasing late this year to ensure they don't get left behind when the big guys go 64 bit. And to keep everyone happy, the 3DO 64 bit system will be able to use the 32 bit game software and the 32 bit system can use the 64 bit software with the aid of an adapter

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GERMANY

EMT UP THE ANTE WITH LATEST KIDDIE RIDES

Top German Kiddie Ride manufacturer, EMT have upped the ante in the Kiddie Ride stakes with their new 250 / 255 Series that have added movement, and their range of interactive rides that were exhibited at ATEI and IMA.

The 250 Series (pictured at right) also have an attractive, re-designed base to compliment the new dual movement and the 255 Series which includes the cars, Jeep and small Bulldozer have an extra tilting movement.

The new series were very well received at the two big shows as were the company's new interactive rides like the 310 Mercedes, 510 Ferrari and the 530 Sky Wolf. (pictured below)

In these rides the child can actually control the speed of the movement in the cars by pushing the accelerator or brake, and the up and down movement on the Sky Wolf helicopter by pulling the joystick. The interactive rides showed on test that they could increase earnings from 30% to up to 200% and EMT are obviously on a winner with the interactive facility.

The new 250/255 and interactive rides are all TUV/GS approved (the European equivalent to a UL listing)

EMT have also secured the Disney character license for a range of kiddies playground furniture that should be a must for FEC's.

◆ *The "Phantom" movie is now in production with a big budget and the "Ghost Who Walks" comic character would have to be an excellent theme for a fighting video game or even a Pinball*

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ALG INCREASE MARKETING STAFF

American Laser Games, makers of the Mad Dog McRee games and Fast Draw Showdown have increased their marketing staff with the promotion of April Mathews to Marketing Assistant to Stan and Jim Jarocki in coin-op sales.

April is currently attending the University of New Mexico completing a degree in Business and Psychology

NAMCO TOO

Namco America have appointed industry veteran, Emilio Cabrera as International Sales Manager. Emilio who has spent 25 years in the industry, will be responsible for sales in Central America, South America and Australia

UNITED STATES

LAZER-TRON HAVE BIG FIRST YEAR AS PC

Lazer-Tron's first year as a Public Company has been a very successful one with sales doubling to over $15 million and net income increasing by a whopping 153% to $1,693,000.

Lazer-Tron President and CEO, Norman Petermeier is confident of an even better performance in the current fiscal year when the company will release another six new products, make their first move into video related games and further expand into the international markets that hold so much promise for the company's future.

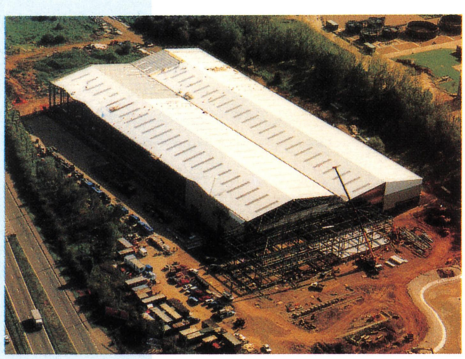
UNITED KINGDOM

WORLD'S BIGGEST PLUSH CENTRE TAKES SHAPE

The new European corporate headquarters of PMS International is nearing completion in Essex, England and it's a building of mammoth proportions.

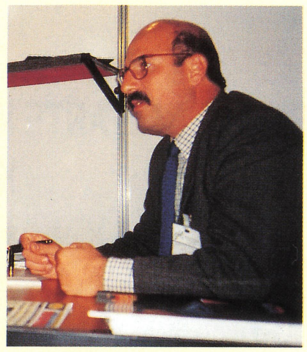
PMS International supply plush and prizes to the amusement industry and their new building of 354,000 square feet is the biggest prize and gift warehouse in the UK and assumed to be among the biggest in the world.

The warehouse can accommodate 340,000 cartons, equal to more than 2000 20 foot containers and will cost over £5 million with the latest material handling equipment installed. PMS previously operated out of eleven smaller warehouses.



SOUTH AMERICA

SALEX '95 TO FURTHER OPEN UP HUGE SOUTH AMERICAN MARKET



From CBI's South American Correspondent Joao Ghani

Comprising 13 countries with a total population of over 350 million people, South America is an expanding and potentially huge market for coin-op and associated entertainments.

And SALEX (South American Leisure Expo) is fast becoming a major ingredient in the opening up of this region.

Organised by the Worlds Fair Group, and sponsored by EuroSlot, Park World magazines, the US AAMA and Games News, the Brazilian trade magazine, SALEX and it's 'sister' show PARKEX will be held this year from the 24th to 26th August and looks like being a ripper.

This will be the show's third year and if the increase from last year is of the same percentage as that between the 1993 and 1994 shows, the big Sao Paulo Mart Centre will be bursting at the seams.

And for visitors, Sao Paulo, venue for SALEX is the fastest growing and most exciting city in Brazil. Although Brasilia is the country's capital, Sao Paulo, situated in the richest area of South America is clearly the number one city, politically, economically and culturally.

It has a population of over 15 million 'Paulistanos' and is the wealthiest city in South America, headquarters of many multi national companies and well connected to the nearby resort areas.

The contacts for SALEX are John Slattery in the UK on +44 161 624 3687, (Fax: +44 161 665 1260), or Roberto Selles in Brazil on (011) 212 6126

BINGO STRONG

Bingo remains popular in most South American countries and though it has had an increasing affect on the earning power of coin-op equipment, particularly video games, it looks to have now levelled out

The 1994 SALEX increased 100% on the initial 1993 event and organisers have received indications that the 1995 event will increase similarly.

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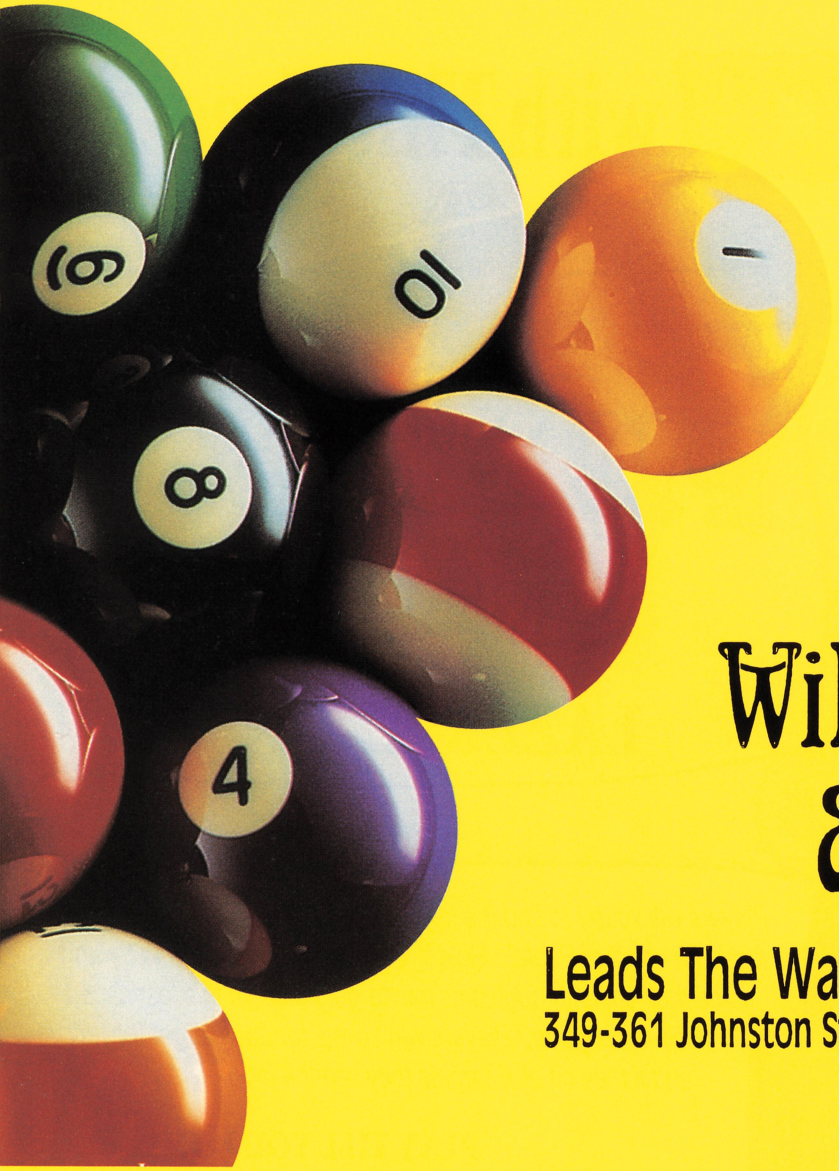

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UNITED STATES

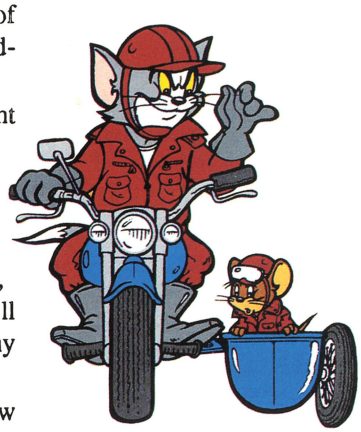
JUST KIDDIE RIDES RECEIVE UL LISTING APPROVAL AND EXTEND WARRANTY

Just Kiddie Rides Inc of the USA have received the valuable "UL" listing approval on it's full product line of coin-operated Kiddie Rides including the licensed products recently introduced by the company.

The company has also been granted the equivalent listing for their product line in Canada, "CUL" which is recognised by all jurisdictional authorities in all Provinces and Territories of Canada.

And to top things off, Just Kiddie Rides have increased their warranty on all Kiddie Rides to 36 months, the longest warranty in the Kiddie Ride industry and will back the warranty up with same day shipping of any replacement parts that may be required.

The company will be presenting their entire new product range at ACME in Reno this month and are confident that with new licences that include, Tom & Jerry, the Batmobile and the Jetsons, they have the very best in KR product for the 90's and beyond.



◆ X-MEN LOOKING GOOD

The Capcom PCB game X-Men, licensed from the comic and featuring countless fighting freaks, is getting good reports around the world as it now starts to move into international markets.

UNITED KINGDOM

POOL TABLE FOR KIDS

One of the UK's leading Pool table manufacturers, Hazel Grove Superleague have produced a Junior Pool Table that's designed to enable young Pool players to thoroughly enjoy the game in their lead up to playing the adult game.

The "STIX" Junior Pool Table is ideal for kids up to the age of 12 and should prove a boon for FEC operators that are constantly searching for products to keep smaller kids entertained.

The table comes complete with accessories that include a new patented Junior Pool Cue which has a unique handle grip that eliminates the need for young players to form the conventional bridge, but still allows them to achieve an accurate cuing action.

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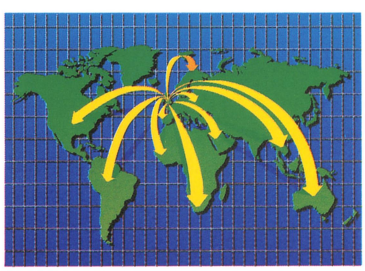
★ NOVELTY GAMES ★



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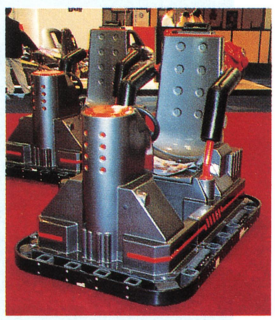
SINGAPORE

NAMCO CONTINUE EXPANSION IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

Namco's Singapore based subsidiary, Happy Land Singapore, is set to open a 1300 square metre arcade/family centre in the basement of a large city department store.

The location will be named Cyber Station Singapore and will be the first site in South East Asia to have the Japanese game makers brilliant *Drift King* race carts installed.

The company intends loading over 140 pieces into the location and spending a total of more than US 2.5 million on the site.



Namco's Drift King race carts drift around at 12mph like they're on ice. They are battery powered & computer operated.

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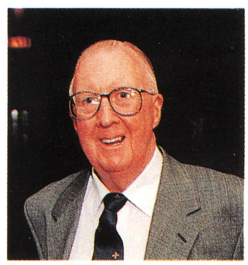

Allan Willis OBE, General Secretary BACTA

A very positive thing to come out of ATEI for British operators was BACTA's confidence that the new Amusement Machine Tax announced late last year for introduction in November of this year, will be changed considerably in favour of the operator, long before November.

The association have prepared an almost unarguable case for the abolition of the tax before it's ever implemented, showing that the Government can not possibly hope to receive the revenue that their Budget predicted.

It's believed that quiet overtures to the Government have already received a favourable response, so confident are BACTA of a positive result and it was noticeable at ATEI that as the show progressed and the word from BACTA filtered through, the general attitude of British operators improved immensely.

The association case will be based largely on the negative revenue the tax will provide once things like the machines that will be removed from locations, the loss of jobs in the operating industry and the losses to the manufacturing industry are taken fully into account, and we believe itmakes a very strong argument for abolition of the tax, let alone a reduction.

The presentation of the industry case and the organising of a good lobbying campaign all means a lot of extra work for BACTA Secretary, Allan Willis OBE, who was looking forward to a nice peaceful retirement in the middle of this year.

But the always smiling Willis sees it as just another job that has to be done and told Cash Box laughingly that the fishing could wait for a while, and once he ironed this one out, he'd get a lot more enjoyment out of his retirement anyway.

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AUSTRALIA

OPERATORS PUSH ASSOCIATIONS FOR TRADE PRACTISES ACTION

The threat of exclusive distribution on "must have" video products coming into practise again, has seen an unprecedented push by Australian operators who fear they may be unable to operate the new Sega game Sega Rally, for the country's operator associations to instruct the National AMOA's solicitors, Coors Westgarth Chambers to prepare a brief for presentation to the Trade Practises Commission (TPC).

It's believed that the State associations, in conjunction with the National AMOA are now looking at the feasability of such a move, but the feeling is so strong in the operator community, that the associations would be in grave danger of losing all support if they were to walk away from members demands to bring on a TPC inquiry.

The Trade Practises Commission in Australia has similarities with the US Monopolies Commission and holds wide reaching powers that can cut the legs from under the biggest companies as witnessed recently in their treatment of errant multinational oil companies.

Prior to the Mothers Imports case a couple of years ago, representations were made to the TPC who were quite receptive, but when the parallel case was won, the TPC action was let lapse.

However, operators who have spoken to Cash Box on this matter are adamant that this time, the associations must go on with the job and wipe out the situation where they feel they could be unfairly disadvantaged by a competitor.

◆ JACKIE CHAN TO HIT VIDEO SCREENS

Kaneko have a new fighting game that should be seen at ACME this month, titled "The Kung Fu Master, Jackie Chan"

The game uses digitised images of the very popular Jackie Chan who supervised the making of the game, and other top Martial Arts professionals in what is termed an "all action" game that is reported to have tested extremely well in early tests in Japan

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ATEI

The famed circus masters Barnum & Bailey probably think they own the term "The Greatest Show on Earth", but in late January, ATEI '95 laid claim to the title in no uncertain manner when they presented the best all round trade show yet seen in this industry.

ATEI '95 was something special in the way of Amusement Trade Shows. It may not have had a lot of exciting new product, but it had an incredible vitality that created a perfect atmosphere for international buyers in particular, to cut loose in a spending frenzy that will surely provide new figures for sales generated at a trade show if there is any way such a figure can ever be put together.

The huge number of British operators present, faced with the prospect of a brand new tax being hung around their necks were understandably more reserved than the foreign visitors, but by the end of show even they were getting into the swing of things as their confidence of the tax being reduced substantially, grew.

But whether they bought or just looked, every one of the 30,000 plus, amusement trade people who visited the show, knew they were at the best, all round International Trade Show on the circuit.

It was impossible for them not to know.

Held at Earls Court Exhibition Centre just out of London central, ATEI brought together the largest gathering of international visitors ever seen under the one roof in this industry. As this is written, final figures are not known, but we expect the number to be up around 4500 as pre show registrations this year were more than the total number of foreign attendees at the 1994 show (3544) which was a record breaker in it's own right.

Peter Rushbridge, Exhibition Manager for ATE Ltd and organiser of ATEI, has good reason to smile after the brilliant success of ATEI '95

The innovative "International Visitors Lounge" which had it's size greatly increased this year was like a gathering of the United Nations and was constantly crowded with foreign visitors from an estimated 100 countries, seeking a respite from the incredibly busy show floor.

The organisation, crowd management and attention to the smallest details were all of the highest order and full praise must be given to ATE Ltd, the managing company owned by BACTA, the British trade association.

The Board of ATE Ltd and the general management team led by Peter Rushbridge have created a magnificent showcase for the amusement industry and could be excused for taking it a bit easy in future, but they are already working on expanding ATEI '96 which

will see the introduction of a separate area for bigger attractions and probably necessitate moving the adjacent ICE (Casino Show), upstairs as the full 23,000 square metres available to ATEI this year was fully booked.

But back to ATEI '95

NEW EQUIPMENT

VIDEO GAMES

One of the most noticeable things at ATEI in the line of equipment was the shortage of new video games, but most of what there was had a look of quality about it and operators at both ends of the buying scale should find games that are useful to them.

The game that drew the most interest was undoubtedly the new Sega driving game, *Sega Rally Championship*. Though not quite complete it's very easy to see this one being another big winner for the Japanese game maker. *Sega Rally* has even better graphics than Daytona USA and the added excitement of rally racing puts the game in the "no risk" category.

Another new game from Sega was also unfinished, but showed enormous promise, it's a *'Virtua"* soccer game, with *Virtua Fighter* type graphics and action portrayed on a soccer field. Definitely one to keep your eye out for.

The big Deith Leisure stand which displayed Sega Rally and the other hot Sega games was at times impossible to get within 20 feet of. Operators "virtually" attacked the Sega games like *Virtua Cop*, *Virtua Fighter 2* and *Daytona USA*, and good business was done on the other good lines the company displayed.

The rival Brent Leisure stand was also kept extremely busy, *Ace Driver* was the centre of a lot of interest, but it was their new fighting game, *Tekken* which created the most interest

With rows of *Tekken* in the impressive big upright and several large screen models on display, operators gave the game a nice old work out and throughout the duration of the show it remained a hot topic of discussion amongst operators.. Namco's new tank game, *Cyber Commando* was another game that drew a lot of attention and should do better than it's earlier 'cousin' *Cyber Sled.*

Jaleco's *Red Zone* and the European made driving game, *Blomby Car* give buyers in the lower ranges a bit of variety

Sega's latest driving game, *Sega Rally Championships* looks another big winner, but will need the promised linking before it will affect *Daytona USA*

Bell Fruit are now ready to ship their fighting game, *Rise of the Robots* a quite impressive game which we believe stemmed from a very popular home video game of the same name. There's nothing 'home video' about this one though, it's a real coin-op game which should return operators a handy profit as it is not expensive on todays standards and looks quite capable.

Kaneko came up with one of the surprises of the show in their Part 2 version of the *Great 1000 Mile Rally (Mille Miglia)* Why it was something of a surprise is that everyone and their dog was expecting to see a linked *World Rally*, but Kaneko showed their linked version of *Mille Miglia* and there was no sign of the other game.

And *Great Rally 2* is not just a linked version of the original game, the company has put a lot of work into enlarging the cars on screen, improving the overall graphics considerably, tidying up the steering and speeding the game up.

The original game has done quite well in many places, but watch out for this one as it appears likely to do very much better.

Kaneko also have a new fighting game available titled *Jackie Chan* which is licensed from the karate fighting movie character who has a cult like following around the world.

Capcom were rather quiet at ATEI, showing *X-Men* and *Armoured Warriors*, two games that have been out for a while, many thought the company would have their *Street Fighter* game out to run with the movie which is doing top business, but that was not the case.

There is a big 'buzz' however, that this company is almost set to release what they believe is a 'killer' video game and with their past record we'd have to assume they will deliver the goods.

Jaleco released their new driving game, *Red Zone* in what looked like unfinished form. This one takes players on a wild ride around Tokyo highways and if tidied up a bit, could prove useful without challenging the big driving games

Kaneko's Great 1000 Mile Rally 2, note the bigger, more detailed graphics. And it's linkable up to 4 pieces

Overall, what video product was on show was generally of very good quality, but there was not a lot of new stuff and the driving games were once again the centre of most interest.

PINBALL

The Pinball sector was well served as far as quantity goes, but not particularly strong in quality with the exception of *Shaq Attaq*, the Premier game shown on Direct Machine Distributors and United Distributing Co's stands, that's already in the market and doing exceptionally strong business.

The new games shown were *Frankenstein* from Sega, *Dirty Harry* from Williams, *The Shadow* from Bally and a game titled *Bike Race* from the Spanish company, Sleic - Petaco.

None of the new games shown got close to the slightly older *Shaq* which was clearly accepted by operators as the best Pinball at the show. The Williams/Bally games were once again disappointing to those who have high expectations of the

Bally's "The Shadow" Themed on an absolutely dreadful movie.....the Pinball is so-so

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ELECTRONIC SHOOTING GALLERIES

High up on the list of the world's top Pinball hustlers, Premier's Gil Pollock gets in a bit of *Shaq* practice at ATEI at one of the few times the shows #1 Pins weren't going flat out.

company with the word "boring" being heard quite often around them and though *Frankenstein* seems a bit better than recent Sega (DE) games, it didn't appear to go over real well with operators.

A can be expected, the Spanish built game *Bike Race* has a ways to go before it can really compete with the American made machines, but it will probably find buyers in Europe.

Pinballs were not a big item at ATEI, distributors appeared to load their stands in accordance with the current British attitude towards Pinball and with little thought to the number of international buyers that were present.

The new British tax has put a real damper on all amusement games in Britain and you could see it in the displays.

REDEMPTION

Probably the biggest growth sector at ATEI was Redemption, a large number of American manufacturers were represented and both British and European manufacturers expanded their redemption displays considerably.

Several new games were on display and one of the most impressive was the ICE Inc. game *Cyclone* which was shown on the big Electrocoin stand and attracted constant interest from operators.

Ralph Coppola, the ICE Inc chief came over for the show and he was kept extremely busy answering questions and writing orders for this fascinating, almost addictive game that looks to have a real bright future in all markets. ICE also had their *Flintstones* kids pinball and *Mini Dunxx* basketball game on show and both of these were very popular also.

Electrocoin had several other redemption games on show including the good looking Jaleco game, *World PX Soccer*, a penalty kick game that combines video with the physical kick, but probably the best all round Redemption game display at the show was the Harry Levy Amusements stand where apart from the UK company's own good products, Coastal Amusements, Smart Industries and NSG Inc from the USA were represented

Coastal Amusements' emphasis was on their two new games, *Speed Ball Rally* and *Fred Flintstones Memory Match* and both done extremely well with buyers from all over the world. Lennie Dean was stoked with the reception the games got and commented on the high quality of foreign buyers that were looking very seriously at redemption.

Smart Industries, also from the USA appeared to do some great business, the *Smart Redemption Centre* in particular was a very popular item and the very solid *Buddy Bear, Big Bertha* and Co, all attracted a lot of interest.

"Just sign there" says ICE Inc's Ralph Coppola (left) to a an ATEI customer as he moves the almost addictive, *Cyclone* redemption game into the world markets

We caught Ray Britton (left) and Harry Levy of Harry Levy Amusements with their good game *Feed Fido*, before the show opened, otherwise we would never have got near them with the crowds they had on their stand.

The media was at ATEI in force and here, Ray Britton from Harry Levy's Amusements is being interviewed by BSB Sky TV with NSG's *Hightops* kids basketball game in the background

NSG (National Sporting Games), now owned by Skeeball Inc had their *Hightops* and *Super Shot* basketball games on show and as with the ICE *Mini Dunxx*, it was noticeable that this type of game is coming well into favour with buyers from both established, and developing markets.

While playing host to the three American companies, Harry Levy Amusements were far from overshadowed. They had a great display of their own products with *Feed Fido* in big demand and *Penalty Shoot Out* also doing very well.

The very colourful and impressive array of Harry Levy pushers like *Jungle Jive, Rodeo* and *Hollywood* were all popular and this highly respected British company is right up there with the best game manufacturers in the world.

Another big and impressive display of redemption games was seen at the Sound Leisure stand where the excellent *Spida Strika* once again was a big winner with operators.

Probably shouldn't tell, but SL made a bit of a *boo-boo* when the machines were put in place without the prize doors being sealed as is generally done at a show. As we all know, operators rarely miss an opportunity like this and the locals were onto it like a flash, virtually cleaning the machines out of the carefully selected and arranged stock that was meant to see the show through.

Kevin Moss who was telling prospective buyers how the machine had to be kept well stocked to realize the best results, very quickly found himself with a bunch of almost empty machines and no stock available to refill them.

Fortunately it didn't affect sales and the Sound Leisure factory will be pouring out plenty of *Spida Strika's* to meet the orders that came out of ATEI.

Almost all the main American manufacturers of redemption games were at ATEI with apart from those already mentioned, Lazer-Tron, Bromley, Coin Concepts Inc, Meltec, Skeeball, Doyle and many others all doing well in their search for world markets.

Just that so many American companies were present or represented at ATEI is notable, they gave the show an even greater breadth of product and clearly showed the coin-op world that the American companies are now 100% committed to taking their products into new, foreign markets .

And the fact that they all done so well in a country that because of the popularity of AWP's is quite weak as far as redemption games go, shows just how strong an international flavour ATEI have now built into their show.

The new Rowe Ami "Eagle CD" wall mounted Jukebox made it's debut at ATEI and got a tremendous response

MUSIC

Despite the problems that prevail in the UK with coin-op music, ATEI staged an impressive display of music machines.

Rowe AMI and Sound Leisure had new products while NSM featured their updated *Nostalgia Gold* model.

The *Eagle* wall mounted CD Jukebox that Rowe promised at San Antonio was produced and the company has done everything they said they would do in this fine piece that seems assured of great success in world markets.

The *Eagle* is one of the best things that Rowe has done for many years, it's stylish, eye catching and of course very functional. The machine got a great reception and it was evident from the reactions of music veterans Joel Friedman and Rex Yannarell who made the trip over for ATEI, that the company knows it has a real winner.

The UK's Sound Leisure have also gone the way of the wall mounted CD Jukebox with their new *Mini*

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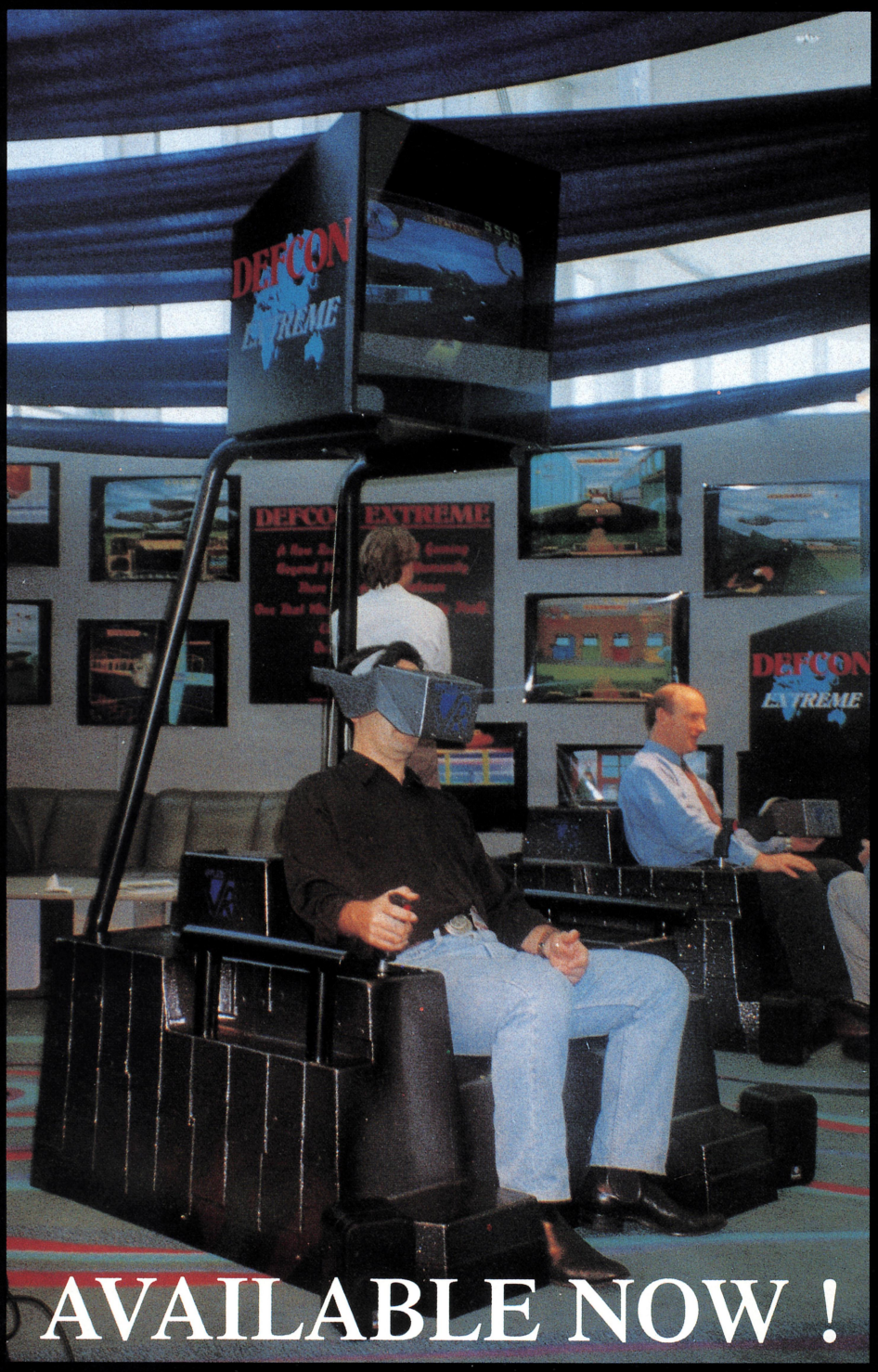

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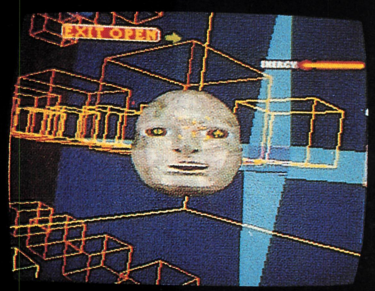

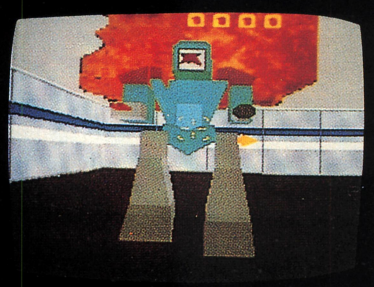

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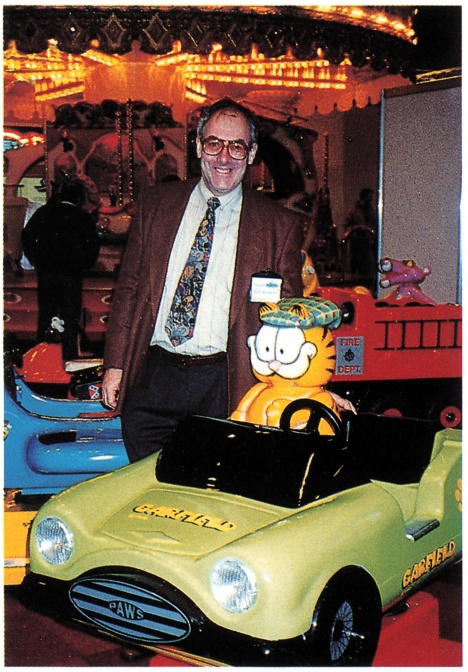


"Jolly Roger" Whittaker with his latest 'red hot' Garfield car ride at ATEI

Jook and this one is an incredibly clever design that reduces the size of the 30 CD machine to an almost unbelievable level.

SL have put two years development into this one and the result is a very functional machine with full display, that can be bought at a very reasonable price and placed anywhere that's got a couple of square feet of wall space. There seems little doubt that the company will find a good market for this product.

NSM showed there updated *Nostalgia Gold* model that now uses an Antique Apparatus Inc cabinet. AA Inc who also manufacture the Rock-Ola range of Jukeboxes are by far the best manufacturers of nostalgia type cabinets in the world and the AA cabinet certainly makes the NSM product a very attractive package.

Rock-Ola was also represented at ATEI with the *Legend* and *Rocket 2* as was Wurlitzer and a number of British companies with machines basically built for the local market.

KIDDIE RIDES

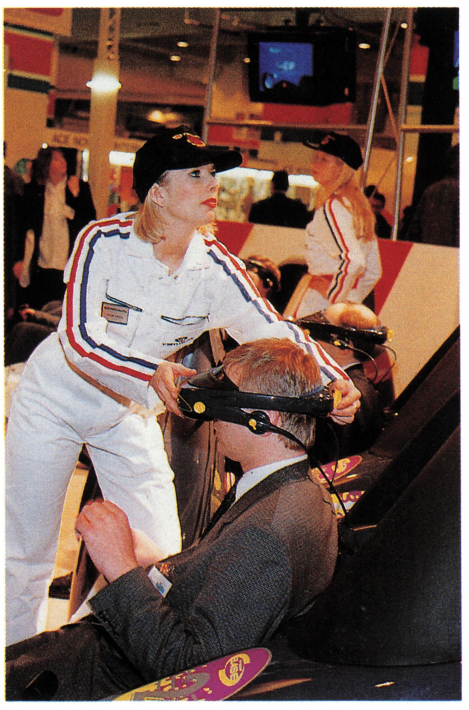
As we've been seeing at most trade shows of late, Kiddie Rides were once again a big item at ATEI with possibly 20 manufacturers showing their wares.

EMT had a good range of machines on the NSM stand and also showed a couple of their new line of Disney products which are not coin operated. These are very attractive playground pieces for FEC's and will obviously serve a purpose, but one couldn't help but think they were lacking something with no real means of earning evident.

The Kiddie Rides on show came from all over the world. Manufacturers from Italy, Spain, the UK, USA and Germany to name a few, put on an extraordinary display of colourful, innovative rides that will ensure the KR market continues to grow as it has for the past few years. Most are working on licensed characters and the increase in earnings that the well known characters from TV, comics and movies generate, has more and more operators leaning towards KR's than ever before.

VIRTUAL REALITY

The UK's Virtuality Plc once again led the way with VR and their very impressive display of the *2000 Series* machines was a hive of activity over the full three days of the show and regardless of the doubts many still have about VR, it never fails to draw crowds at trade shows.



Virtuality Plc are not only the leaders in Virtual Reality games, they're the leader in VR exhibits as well and always put on top class displays wherever they show their products

The Virtuality *2000 Series* machines and games are fast becoming a genuine proposition for coin operation. Over the past 12 months the games have improved enormously and with the hardware price coming down as well, the Virtuality products must be looking good for operators of the larger FEC's

The American company, Reality Concepts that has taken over the former VR-8 Inc's VR concept, showed the Virtual Combat game with the headpiece fixed to the machine that appears little unchanged from it's first showing several years ago under the VR-8 banner.

The big problem that VR games appear to have is coping with the type of reality that is being presented in games like Daytona and Virtua Fighter. Players may not be able to see all around them with these games, but they can become totally involved without the use of a cumbersome and generally uncomfortable head set.

FEC ATTRACTIONS

The UK appears to have the FEC attraction market just about sewn up, the Elton *Kentucky Derby* is a great attraction and as is always the case at ATEI or other shows that the company exhibits at, aspiring players had to wait long periods to get a game.

When you see hardened coin-op people that are around this type of entertainment every day of their lives, scrambling to get a seat at the *Kentucky Derby*, it gives you some idea of the appeal that these games have.

The Pan Amusements *Electronic Shooting Galleries* are another UK made FEC attraction that never fail to attract coin-op people at the shows and it's quite comical to see guys in suits and ladies in swish gowns getting sprayed with water while they are trying to line up a gopher or two. Little wonder that these products are great money spinners in FEC's and other locations.

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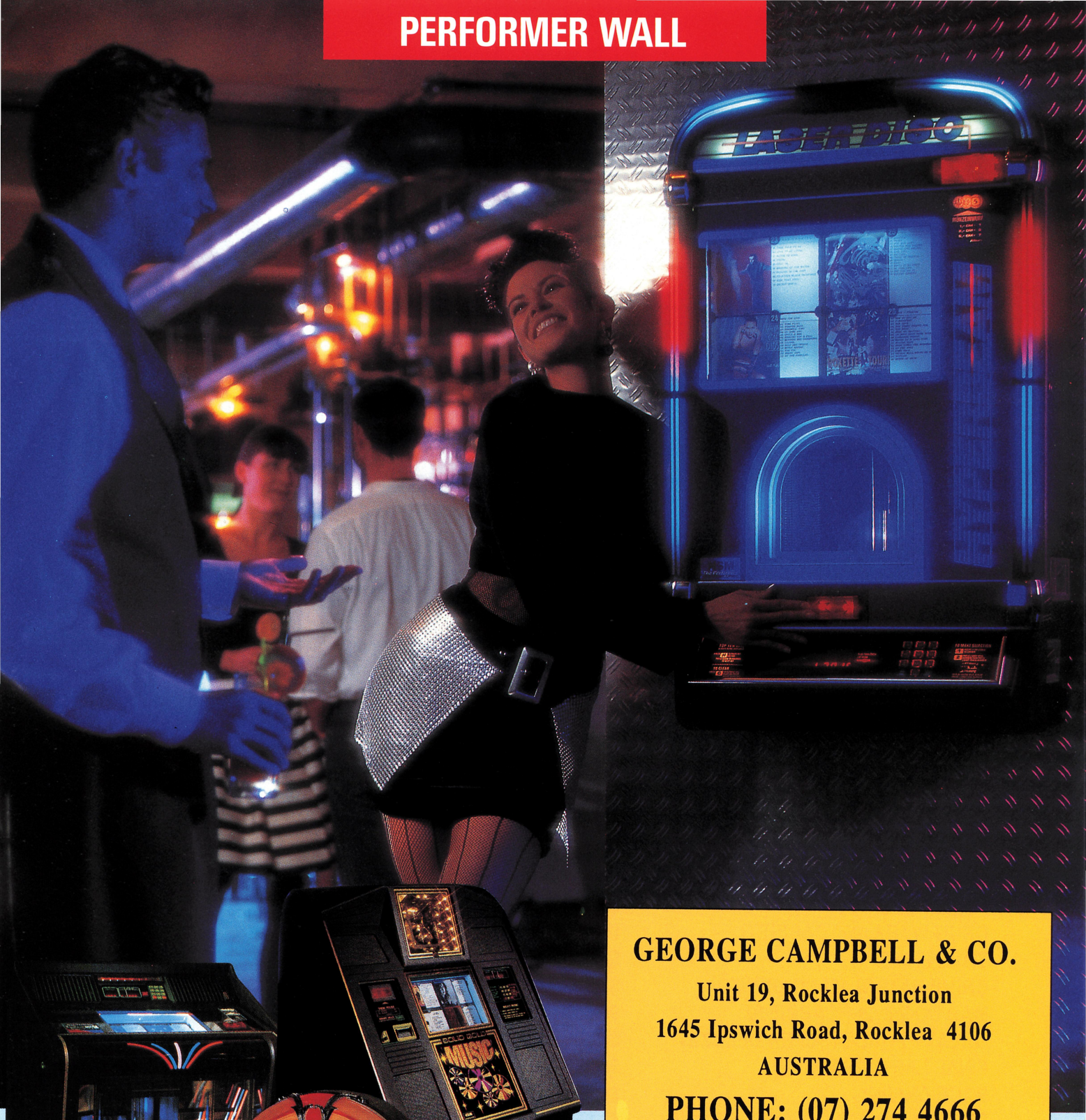

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Tornado Remote Controlled cars, trucks and boats are another top attraction and they were kept very busy at ATEI where they also had a *Water Blaster* installed and a display of their *Bumper Cars.*

Direct Machine distributors had a two lane *Bowlingo* unit installed on their stand and this was another attraction that was kept going non stop. *Bowlingo* is a great system that brings the ever popular ten pin bowling to any location and though it's been around for a while, the system is really coming into it's own now with the emergence of the big family fun centres.

Deith Leisure also have a similar type bowling system and though they did not have the full unit installed at ATEI, had a good display that attracted plenty of interest.

With all the new technology and innovation we have in this industry, it's somewhat surprising that most of the good attractions are age old concepts that have been around since Adam was a kid and JJ Midway's *Hi Striker* which was shown at ATEI, is no exception.

An electronic version of the old Midway game where you belt the pod with a sledge hammer and try and ring the bell at the top of the pole, *Hi Striker* is a game that will never fail to attract and provide income for many years.

Top: Elton's Kentucky Horse Race never fails to get players or show goers in.

Inset: Oz distributor for Premier Tech., Johnathan Wells battles with Premiers LJ Greene for supremacy in the Kentucky HR. We believe LJ won.

A new product on show at ATEI which could have a big future in FEC's is the Namco *Drift King* battery operated race carts that drift around like they're on ice. They do 12 mph and are fully computer operated and in contact with a host computer by way of an infra red transceiver in each cart. Players have control of their carts and can drive them anywhere on the course they want, but the computer will automatically over ride any dangerous behaviour.

SUMMARY

ATEI was a brilliant showcase of the coin-operated and associated equipment that is currently on the market. The fact that there wasn't a lot of new product is neither here nor there as no one can work with product that hasn't yet been created.

What was at ATEI was the product that is available now, the product that the industry has to work with now, and to have it all together under the one roof with over 30,000 trade people to look at it, play it, talk about it and buy it, is what ATEI is all about.

As well as all the current new equipment ATEI also had a good array of used equipment and this too is a vital requisite of a good trade show as the used equipment must be constantly moved out of the more developed markets to make way for new product.

Companies like United Distributing Co had large displays of reconditioned games and with most buyers from the emerging markets only able to buy this type of equipment, this big UK exporter had one of the busiest stands at ATEI.

It's the totality of ATEI that makes it such a great show, in reality there are seldom a lot of new games at this show or many others, but very few people leave Earls Court disappointed or able to say that they didn't see several items that they could use profitably

There's no doubt that all the work ATE Ltd have put in over the past years to establish ATEI as the #1 trade show in the world has paid off in a big way and it would seem the only problem they have now is accommodating the expansion that will be the result of their endeavours.

With a waiting list already put in place for 1996 and some bigger attractions coming in, don't be surprised if ATEI uses all the upstairs space at Earls Court in the next few years and is looking for a bigger venue by the time we close in on the year 2000.

But there's no need to worry about that, as an Aussie mate of ours said on leaving London *"These Brits may not be able to play Cricket or Rugby League and they may not be able to control Prince Charlie, but they can sure put on a great show"*

JJ Midway's Judith Whittaker shapes up on the company's HiStriker

"The show ain't over till the fat lady sings"

Well these ladies weren't fat, but they showed the good natured feeling of ATEI '95 when at show closing they kicked up their heels a bit in a rousing "see you next year" song.
At left the lass who sang to Rowe's Karaoke for three solid days and shouldn't have had any voice left with Press Lounge hostess, Fiona.

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"Off the Record"

Though the exhibition itself is the main attraction to many of the 30,00 odd coin-op people who visit London each year, ATEI is more than a trade show. There are numerous associated events that can make show week a most entertaining and informative experience.

A new event this year, the formation of the "Off the Record Club" gives a good insight into ATE Ltd's attention to all aspects of promoting their annual event. The *Off the Record Club* was established by the genial ATE boss manager, Peter Rushbridge to bring together members of the international trade press in a social atmosphere.

It was first mooted by Peter Rushbridge and Chris Jones at the 1994 Inward Mission as a means of keeping the marvellous rapport that the mission generated between the trade journalists and the ATE people, in place.

It was also ATE's way of saying thanks for all the work the trade magazines around the world have done in helping to promote ATEI, and though we 'journalists' are supposed to be a pretty hard nosed bunch, just the thought was greatly appreciated.

But it turned out to be more than a thought, ATE put it together, and on the first night of the show, the inaugural gathering of the *Off the Record Club* took place at the historic Wig & Pen Club in London's Strand.

The Wig & Pen Club is a London landmark, one of the few buildings that are still standing which survived the Great Fire in the 1800's and as suggested by it's name was for many years the meeting place for London's Lawyers and writers.

Oozing English tradition the Wig & Pen was an experience on it's own. Age has seen it attain that slightly battered look, but most of those present were also slightly battered after long flights into London and an extremely hectic first day of the show, so they fitted in pretty well with the well worn decor.

The added touch was when, on arriving, we found the leaders of BACTA and ATE Ltd had taken valuable time out of extremely busy schedules to be there to welcome us. This was just another example of the mutual respect that has been fostered by the Brits and it didn't go unnoticed.

Trade press journalists gather from all round the world at London's historic Wig & Pen Club with ATE and BACTA chiefs

Jurgen Claus (Automatem Markt, Germany), Jack Rodios and Stefan Dreizehnter (MA Munzautomat, Germany) enjoy a drink at the Wig & Pen

As can be expected it turned out a great night, just as operators who are in heavy competition with each other can socialise with the best of them, so can competing magazines. Everything was laid on to make it a pleasurable experience, food, drink, even interpreters to ensure foreign visitors were not left out and everyone enjoyed.

Lucky it was all *off the record*, as some of the stories told at this gathering would curl your hair, but one of the stars of the night was the barman Carlos. This bloke was a real laugh a minute character that should be on the stage and the fact that he stole the show from 40 to 50 egotistical trade writers, tells you how good he was.

The *Off the Record Club* may seem of little importance in the general scheme of things within this industry, but the bonds forged at the Wig & Pen will see a greater exchange of information than ever before and be of untold benefit to operators all over the world.

And though I'd be the last to dare suggest that coin-op trade journalists can be *bought*, we *can show appreciation*, and there's little doubt that ATE Ltd will also benefit from the fun gathering they organised, and no one would begrudge them that

The next meeting of the *Off the Record Club* is scheduled for ATEI '96, but with the number of shows around the world being what it is, I tend to think members will meet in many distant and exotic places through the year, tip a beer or two and have a bit of a yarn.....*strictly off the record*

Summit Meeting

Attended by representatives and leaders of industry associations from all around the world, the Summit Meeting held at ATEI covered a large range of topics and problems that face the coin-op business.

Topics raised were:

The restrictive new UK tax on amusement machines announced recently.

World Governments "milking" of the industry in general.

Industry image and ways the coin-op business could be promoted.

The parallel situation in America at years end when the 'Sunset clause' comes into play.

The situation in Australia with exclusive rights and lack of competition.

As it was the leading topic at ATEI in general, the new tax to be imposed on UK operators of £250 per machine was the subject of much discussion at the Summit. Representatives were fully aware that this type of tax was unlikely to remain strictly a British problem with Governments being what they were.

This then turned the discussion to Governments in general, particularly their attitude to the coin operated amusements industry and penchant for treating coin-op as a never ending supply of revenue.

The full Summit team at January's ATEI in London.

The fact that Governments can basically do what they like to the coin industry without any fear of upsetting voters other than those few who work in the industry, obviously didn't go unnoticed and there was considerable discussion on ways that the associations could work together to not only lift the image, but to promote our products and the industry in general to the public.

Representing the five most powerful industry associations in the world, from left, Steve Koenigsberg (AAMA), Masaya Nakamura (JAMMA) Tami Norberg-Paulson (AMOA) Roger Withers (BACTA) and Brian Meardon (Euromat) at the ATEI Summit Meeting.

The very respected Namco chief, Masaya Nakamura representing JAMMA was extremely vocal on this subject and though he felt things were changing for the better, he emphasised that there was still a lot of work to be done.

Bob Fay, representing AAMA raised the subject of parallel imports in the USA which at the end of this year come up for decision with the "Sunset Clause" effectively coming into play.

He also brought into the discussion, the situation in Australia and the lack of competition that exclusive distribution was responsible for and though the matter was not discussed fully, it is now clearly on the agenda for future talks.

While no major decisions came out of the meeting, the dialogue was reported as excellent and though the Summit Meetings have their detractors, (and they probably always will), while ever there is good communication and cooperation between the industry's associations, the industry must be in a better position to handle the many problems that we face than if there was no dialogue.

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IMA

Coming off the highs of ATEI and drawing towards the end of a long trip that took in Chicago on the way to London, Frankfurt's IMA almost certainly had to be something of an anti climax, and so it proved.

Size wise and in presentation, there is no doubt that IMA is a major show in this industry, but now that ATEI has really taken up the running, the timing which sees the two shows overlap for two days, will always hurt IMA more than ATEI.

It's now time that the organisers, if they want to see the IMA show expand and hold it's importance, to concede the dates to ATEI and find a spot on the calendar that they can call their own. There was a time when IMA was considered likely to become the biggest amusement trade show in the world, but that will never be possible while they go head on with ATEI.

The good part about IMA was the attitude of the local operators, Germany is obviously on the way back up, and a strong Germany has the power to lift the whole of Europe.

Main items on display were the AWP's made for German and some other European markets, Electronic Darts, Pool and Billiard tables, but a couple of 'stand out' amusement machine displays were provided by Tuning Electronics and Nova.

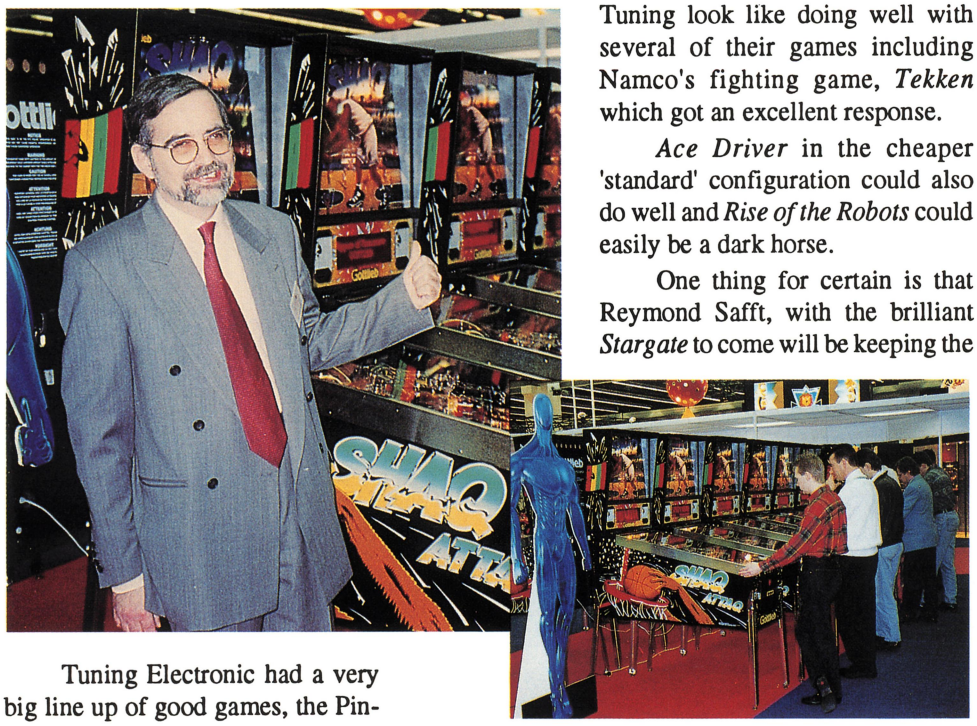
Nova took a huge amount of space, but what value there was in displaying 96 electronic dart machines, was hard for this writer to follow. It gave cynical writers the impression that they had nothing else to fill up the space so they just kept pouring in the darts machines.

Cruis'n USA was popular and looks like doing particularly well in Germany though a lot of amusement games are 'soft'

10 or 20 tops would have surely got the message across that they are into darts, but 96? That's overkill.

When they got down to amusement games they did put on a good display though, they had their usual multi Pinball display of *Dirty Harry's* and *The Shadow* and a good array of the latest video's, with *Cruis'n USA* being quite popular.

Another 'big gun' in Germany and Europe, Bally Wulf, showed the Sega Pinballs and a few other amusement games amid a large display that was dominated by the soft German payout machines, but the best display of amusement games was Tunings by far.



Reymond Safft, Tuning Electronics boss with the latest Premier/Gottlieb game, Shaq Attaq which was extremely popular at the show.

Tuning Electronic had a very big line up of good games, the Pinball, *Shaq Attaq* was the central piece, ably backed up by *Tekken, Ace Driver, Rise of the Robots, Hot Memory, Raiden DX* and a host of *Neo Geo* games.

There's no doubt from the response it received that *Shaq* is going to 'kill' in Germany and Europe, and it was quite incredible to see Williams *Dirty Harry* somehow awarded the "Pinball of the Show"

All anyone could ask when it was announced, was who judged the award as it was obvious in random surveys taken by several journalists, that operators didn't. The operators clear pick was *Shaq Attaq* by a margin of something like 7 to 1, and *Frankenstein* came in well ahead of *Dirty Harry* which is a so-so game that uses a few *Star Trek* features to stop it being really boring.

Awards like this reflect on the whole show and IMA would do well to insist that genuine written surveys are taken from genuine operators before allowing awards such as this to be thrown around.

Let's watch the ratings over the next few months and see how paying players rate the current crop of Pinball games.

Back to Tuning and though video is not real strong in Germany or anywhere in Europe right now, Tuning look like doing well with several of their games including Namco's fighting game, *Tekken* which got an excellent response.

Ace Driver in the cheaper 'standard' configuration could also do well and *Rise of the Robots* could easily be a dark horse.

One thing for certain is that Reymond Safft, with the brilliant *Stargate* to come will be keeping the pressure right on Germany's 'Big 3' for many months to come.

The German arm of Deith Leisure didn't have the best of positions, but operators can always find a good game and they soon found the new Sega games, *Sega Rally* and *Virtua Soccer*. Many had not seen *Virtua Fighter 2* or *Virtua Cop* before the show so these games also got a very hectic work out.

As was said earlier, Electronic Darts were a big item at IMA, as well as Nova's 96 pieces, all the major manufacturers had good displays and it seems that Europe has really taken to the soft tip game. Valley, through NSM have pumped well over 50,000 units of their *Cougar Darts* into Europe and are confident there will be a lot more yet.

It was interesting to see manufacture of these games spreading to places like Croatia where a company called Erwo make a dart game titled *Magic Darts.*

Magic Darts was on show at IMA and it was pretty good, or certainly looked that way to the non darts player.

Magic Darts appeared to have everything that the better known and more expensive games has and if darts hold up in Europe as looks likely, there seems no reason why this young company which only started manufacture in 1990 won't do well.

Erwo are based in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, and export the *Magic Dart* game to Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Germany, Russia and Macedonia.

There were big displays of Jukeboxes and Pool tables with NSM having a huge selection of music machines centred around their new Nostalgia Gold model and Wurlitzer also with a big display featuring their New York NY and Vegas CD models plus of course the beautiful and ageless 1015 CD

Kiddie Rides were another

The Erwo team with their Magic Darts game at IMA

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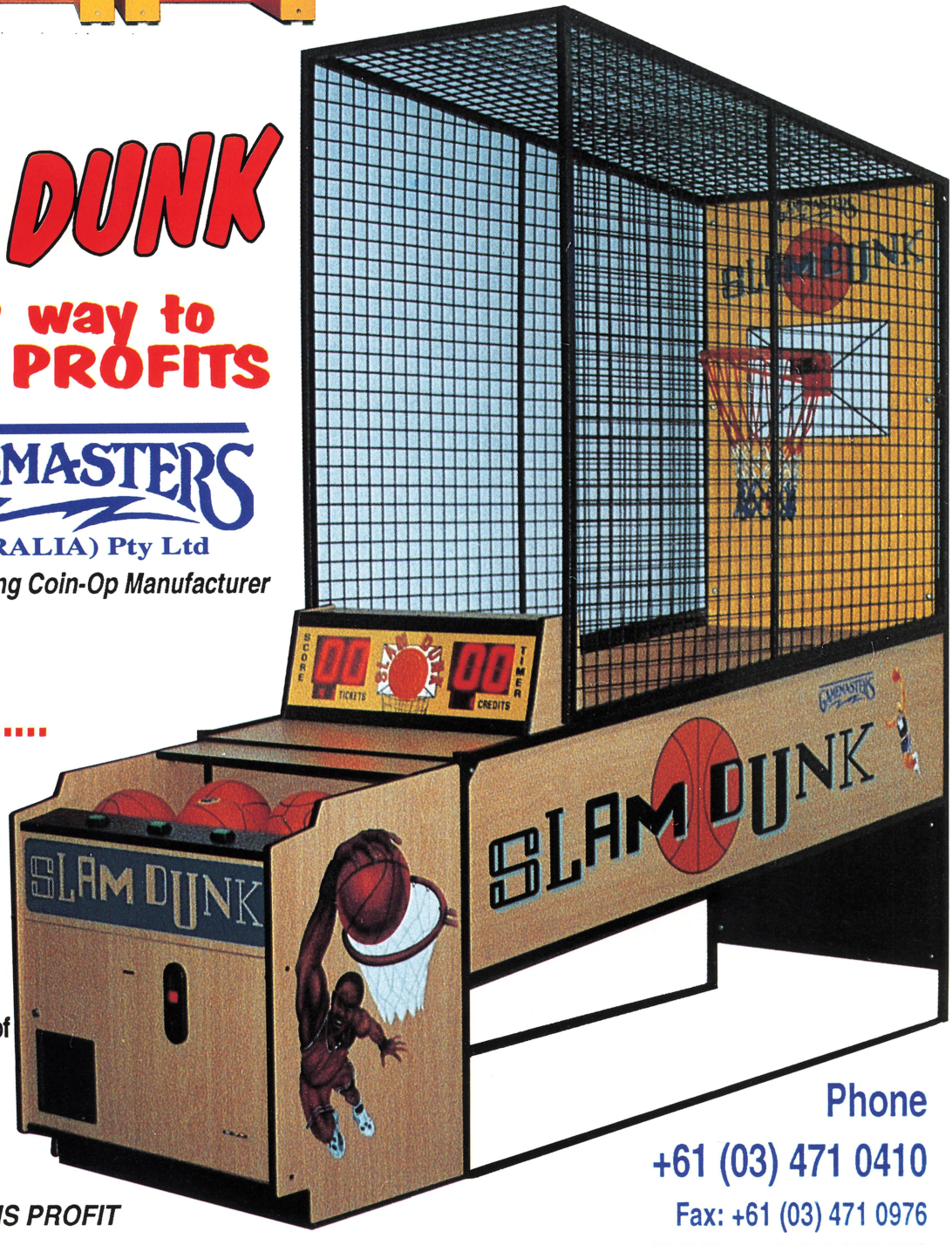

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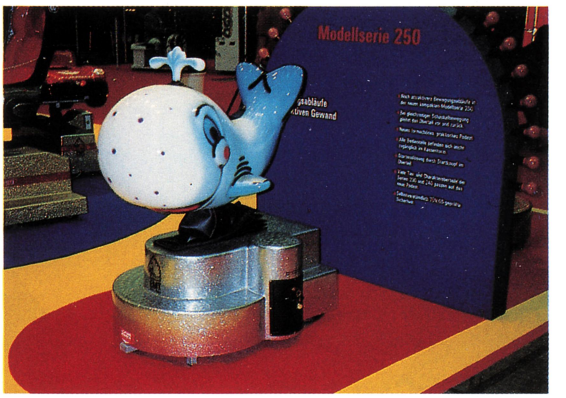
strong item at IMA, but there wasn't anywhere near as many on show as there was at ATEI. EMT and Falgas had the biggest displays and looked to do some good business, though there were a lot of other brand machines spread around the twin halls on mixed product stands.

EMT got an excellent response to their new rides that feature added movement, interactive play and remodelled bases. Already very popular in Europe, and in fact, the world, EMT are set to further increase their sales with these new lines.

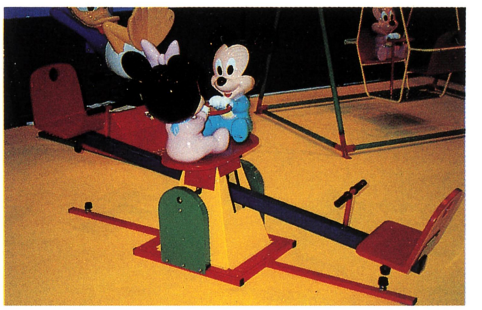


At right one of the new EMT Series 250 rides and some of the company's Disney playground furniture and below is Falgas's IMA exhibit.

The company also showed a full range of their new Disney licensed playground furniture and this too got a top response from operators who could be seen mentally placing it in their FEC's.

Kiddie Rides are particularly strong all over the world right now, but nowhere are they as strong as in Europe and of course there is intense competition for market share, but companies like EMT, Falgas and the British manufacturers are all manufacturing excellent product and the KR operators and kid riders are the big winners.

IMA was an interesting show but as was said earlier, it lost a lot in the international area by overlapping with ATEI and has basically been relegated to being a purely European Show while held so close to the British event.



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STARGATE

The Stargate movie is a box office blockbuster... the Pinball will be a cash box buster!

The highlight of IMA for those looking for new product, was not in the huge Frankfurt Exhibition Centre where the show was held, but in a hotel suite at the Marriott Hotel, just across the road where Reymond Safft of Tuning Electronics arranged a special showing of the soon to be released Premier Pinball, *Stargate*.

Remember that name, *Stargate,* 'cause unless one of the other manufacturers can come up with another Addams Family, *Stargate* is going to be the #1 Pinball of 1995.....*no risk!*

This is a quite unbelievable game and even to those of us who have a penchant for Gottlieb Pinballs, it's beyond any expectations or hopes held. *It's a genuine ripper*

Though one well known trade journalist of the English variety was seen walk into the room and out of it without even giving the beautiful machine a passing glance, everyone else present at the showing was captivated by it. This writer has seldom seen such consensus among a gathering of coin-op people that we were all looking at a super hit.

Gil Pollock, Steve Kauffman and LJ Greene were all present and as they were already aware of the games earnings on test locations, they were not surprised at the response *Stargate* received.

Premier Technology distributors present were positively drooling and some were noted whacking in orders without any testing to get up the front of the production schedule, so confident were they that they had a winner.

It was extremely gratifying to this writer to see Premier produce such a machine. We got a bit of a bagging 12 months ago when we wrote that Premier Technology were the next logical #1 Pinball manufacturing company and that they had the people in place to achieve it.

What are they now if they are not the current #1 Pinball manufacturer? Their two games in the market now, *Freddy Krueger* and *Shaq Attaq* are clear #'s 1 & 2 in most countries, and they're going to top them up with *Stargate.*

Three #1's in a row is plenty good enough for this writer to position Premier as #1 and particularly when they still make the most reliable Pinball on the market and even allowing for a price increase in *Stargate* (worth every penny of it) they are still cheaper than the other brands available.

OK, what's so hot about *Stargate*? Well the first thing that will hit you when you look at it is that you will find it hard to believe that you are looking at a Gottlieb game.

This has been happening for several models, since *Rescue 911* actually, each model since has looked less like the traditional Gottlieb machine than the one before it.

Pollock and his team at Premier have deliberately gone out to create a new look Gottlieb Pinball whilst retaining the many good features and built in reliability that have been their strong points.

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THE MASK, a novelty game so hot It's SSSMOKIN'!

Redemption

Redemption is here to stay, don't fall for the trap of thinking it's just another passing craze.

As all the major trade shows in recent months have shown, redemption is bigger than ever. The concept has expanded so much and been so successful that it can no longer be called "just another industry fad".

If there was any doubts lingering in the minds of sceptical operators, they should have been completely erased at this years ATEI in London where every manufacturer of note in the redemption field exhibited their products to a huge international gathering, and every one of them were run off their feet answering enquiries.....and taking orders.

Having said this, redemption isn't easy money either. It's not just a matter of lighting up the machines and collecting the coin, it takes a lot of work and organisation to set up properly, and a lot of work and organisation to operate. As many operators have realised, there's a lot more to operating redemption games than there is to most other coin-op equipment

It's been said many times and cannot be emphasised enough that to be really successful with redemption you need to have a good understanding of both amusement machine operating *and* retailing. It's just one more area where the leisure and retail industry have converged.

If you don't have experience in both these areas, it's probably best to find someone with the necessary knowledge to help you establish your centre.

A redemption centre manager needs to understand all relevant labour laws and safety codes; be able to interview and train employees (as most will be minimum wage employees, they will have to be shown how to do everything); schedule employees for peak and low periods; order, receive, price and display merchandise; keep track of inventory and tickets; and secure cash control and accounting.

While a smooth running redemption operation only comes with experience, we've compiled a few tips from some knowledgable operators that might just be helpful. Redemption is one of those trial and error types of processes and what works for one location may not work for another.

Perhaps one of the best pieces of advice given during the various seminars at last year's Fun Expo was that it is worth the cost of trying something new. Changing the value of your tickets or purchasing a small number of a new product are relatively inexpensive tests. If you don't come up with a winner you haven't lost anything, but if you do....

SOURCING MERCHANDISE

The merchandise used in Redemption is of the utmost importance, it must be attractive to the player, as after all you're going to sell it for several times it's worth, it must be displayed in a manner that shows the variety and the goods to the best advantage, and it must be bought wisely.

Picture courtesy of National Ticket Co

Redemption

There are numerous companies all over the world who supply plush toys, novelties, licensed items an d other merchandise to redemption operators. It's probably an idea to develop good working relationships with a number of these suppliers because no one company will have all the "hot" items that you will want to get your hands on - and quickly! This is especially true of licensed merchandise.

Besides the established merchandise suppliers, there are other ways of obtaining good redemption prizes, and in some cases, local sources can be a lot more convenient. Sometimes they can even be cheaper.

Local outlets of such chains as Target or K-Mart often have reasonably priced plush and toys and some excellent savings can be made on close out sale items.

One operator gave a good example of some lion cubs he picked up at his local Wal-Mart store. It was during the height of the Lion King's popularity and Disney was charging US$25 for the official plush toy. However, Wal-Mart were having a close out on some Lion cub toys which looked exactly like Simba. They may not have been the official merchandise and the quality may not have been *quite* as good, but the little lions still sold like hotcakes in the operator's redemption centre. And they only cost $4.50 each because Wal-Mart were trying to get rid of them!

Keep good stocks and 'busy' displays of the cheaper merchandise and keep it at a level that's easy for the little ones to see

Around 60% of merchandise used is the cheaper low end merchandise like this selection from Laramie Interests in the USA, but it still has to be displayed with thought and kept track of with a good inventory system.

Needless to say, the operator in question bought the shop's remaining stock and then went around to all the Wal-Mart stores within a 100 kilometre radius and bought all their stock as well.

While licensed merchandise can be enormously successful, it can also give you some good ideas. If there is a "craze", other merchandise besides the official, licensed items can normally do really well in redemption centres.

Local sources are also good for those more expensive items like television sets and bicycles. Unless you have a particularly large centre, you only need to have one TV in stock at any one time. It's a lot easier to go to your local K-Mart and replace a TV once someone has won it than it is to order a large number wholesale from someone on the other side of the country.

When it comes to prizes like bikes or roller blades where the customer needs a particular size, it's best to have an agreement with a local sports store. A voucher can be issued so the player can go to the store and pick up the prize in the correct size.

Another area where it is important to have a local supplier is for candy. Redemption centres go through an enormous amount of candy but it doesn't have an indefinite shelf life. Novelty candy also attracts a lot more attention so whenever possible go for oversized or unusual lollies.

SELECTING MERCHANDISE

It's estimated that 60% of the items at a redemption counter are low end merchandise suitable for kids. There's not enough room in this article to even scratch the surface of what is available but all the redemption prize suppliers have full catalogues to help you make your choices. A good idea suggested by one operator was to give the catalogues to your kids and have them circle their favourite item on each page.

To keep the children happy all you need is novelty, bright colours and lots and lots of it. Also make sure the shelves are at their eye level.

"*Novelty items are tremendous because little kids have these tickets in their hand,*" said David Schick of

Redemption

Capcom during a seminar presentation. "*If they go into Toys R Us or some retail store and they ask, 'Mummy can I have a buzzer shock ring?' the parent will say, 'No, you can't have that. Let's go over to the book section...'*

"*What you're trying to do is give kids what they would want if they had control over the money. And when kids have tickets in their hands, they do have control.*"

The other thing that kids usually love is licensed merchandise. Sports team balls and caps are usually staple prizes but when it comes to movie merchandise and other "fad" items, you have to be a lot more careful.

You have to keep up with all the latest trends, but the trick is to bring the merchandise in quickly when it's hot and not order too much because it can die out quickly. There are many redemption operators who still can't get rid of their Jurassic Park and Flintstones merchandise.

Operators should also order their seasonal merchandise conservatively. Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day and Mother's Day (kids play for merchandise they can use as gifts) are the main ones and if you are in America, Halloween is also quite important.

Once the big day has passed, put the merchandise on sale and get rid of it. You don't want to keep the stuff until the next year because by then it will look old and dated.

One good tip is to order your seasonal merchandise in advance - that way you know the suppliers won't run out of stock before you get a chance to place your Christmas order. You can post-date the delivery so the merchandise doesn't take up valuable storage space in your centre.

Almost all novelty and ticket suppliers are happy to hold your orders for you so it's also a good idea to do the same with your redemption tickets. Order more than you need (around 6 months worth) and ask the supplier to hold onto the excess until you need them. Sometimes in the holiday periods ticket manufacturers can run short so by ordering ahead you know you will always have enough.

Getting back to merchandise, make sure you don't just limit yourself to slum items. While cheaper prizes may make up the major part of your redemption counter, it's the high end prizes that lead to repeat customers. If a player has their heart set on an expensive prize they will keep returning to accumulate the required amount of tickets.

You also need high end merchandise to appeal to the adults that come to your centre - they certainly won't be interested in pogs or buzzer shock rings.

RETAIL VALUES

Redemption operators can learn an awful lot from looking at

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successful retail chains like Toys R Us or the Disney stores. These retail outlets know how to get people, especially children, excited about their merchandise.

When you walk into Toys R Us you are overwhelmed with toys - the merchandise jumps out at you. Even if hundreds of exactly the same item are on the shelves, the overall appearance is impressive. And perhaps even more importantly, the toys are at the eye level of kids and adults alike.

Successful operators run their redemption centres as retail outlets. Presentation is all-important. Counters should be well stocked so they become the centrepiece of the amusement centre. Players will walk in and think, "*wow there's a lot of prizes here worth playing for'.*

The least expensive items (or "slum" merchandise, as it is often called) should always be displayed in large numbers. A bin full of various coloured items certainly looks better than a few cheap toys scattered on the shelf.

"*Keep it clean and fresh, move it around, make it appealing, keep it plentiful,*" is one operator's advice.

The Smart Industries "Redemption Centre" has proven to be an excellent addition to Redemption centres, used on it's own in smaller establishments and to compliment a redemption counter in the larger, busier centres.

Players have to *want* what they see displayed at the redemption counter or they won't play the redemption games.

If you think your redemption centre looks a little stale, it doesn't have to be an expensive project to give it a new lease of life. Some slat walls, track lighting and a fresh coat of paint can really do wonders.

The other lead operators should take from the retail sector is the concept of the "sale". No matter how carefully you select your merchandise, there will always be something which you can't move.

As any retail store manager will tell you, it's better to mark it down and get rid of it than it is to let it gather dust and never sell. It's amazing how many people will buy something just because they think it is a "bargain".

Another tip is, if suitable, to put the slow moving merchandise into your rotaries or cranes. Most players are just happy to win something from a crane, regardless of what it is.

TICKET VALUES

The areas of ticket values and payout percentages are probably the most confusing for newcomers to the redemption business. While most locations establish a single ticket value of 1 cent and an average payout of 30 to 35%, there are no hard and fast rules.

Each location has a different customer base and ticket payout percentages are determined from the average scores achieved by players. The only way to find your centre's optimum performance is by a process of trial and error.

If each ticket is given the value of 1 cent, it make is very simple to calculate how many tickets each prize will cost. However, some operators have chosen to make each ticket worth 2 cents to cut down on the number of tickets they have to handle. A 2 cent ticket means that the redemption machines dispense half the number of tickets but each ticket is worth twice as much.

This is much more convenient more convenient for players who are aiming for expensive, high-end prizes. As they usually accumulate tickets over several visits, a 2-cent ticket means they have less tickets to carry around with them. And for the operator, it's cheaper because you're only going through half as many tickets.

On the other hand, if your operation attracts a lot of children or birthday parties you will probably generate more revenue with a 1 cent ticket value. This is because to young kids the number of tickets accumulated becomes a status symbol. The more tickets they can lug

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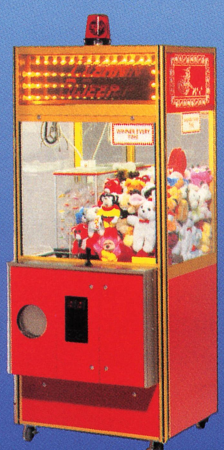

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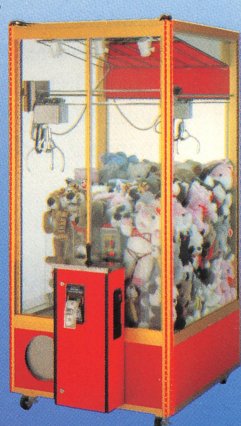

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around and show off with, the more enjoyment they get. It's not unusual for young children to actually value their tickets higher than merchandise.

In locations like this, it has been shown that having 1 cent tickets can increase revenue by 10-15%. It may mean buying twice as many tickets, but people play the machines more.

A third option is to have a few different coloured tickets worth various amounts of "points". Each ticket/point is given a small value - something like 1/4 cent - because kids like really big numbers. Secretly, adults do as well - just look at the score levels built into today's pinballs!

However, instead of spewing out four times as many tickets, the redemption machines are installed with high value tickets - say, 3,5 and 10 point tickets. One operator using this method has found that children easily recognise the different values of the tickets and are greatly attracted to machines dispensing the elusive, red 10-point tickets.

In operating a fast game like ICE Inc's brilliant "Cyclone', operators must be sure they get the set up and percentaging right to ensure both players and operators get full value

PERCENTAGE PAYOUT

As mentioned before, redemption operators have usually found that a payout of 30 to 35% generates the most money. This means the redemption machines pay 30 to 35% of their gross takings back to players in the form of tickets, leaving 65 to 70% to cover your capital investment and operating costs.

However, the 30 to 35% figure is just an over all average for the entire game room. Individual games may perform better at varying levels, just as your particular location may generate more revenue if the average payout is 24%. Like everything else involved in redemption, the ideal payout percentage is a matter of trial and error.

One important point about testing different ticket values and payout levels is that the test must be carried out across the entire redemption centre. There is no use in making a change on a machine and monitoring the performance of that game alone because while they takings may increase on that particular game, it may also be siphoning revenue from other machines in the centre.

As a general rule of thumb, games like Skee Alleys which are played by people of all ages and both sexes may be set to pay out slightly less than other games - around 25% of gross. The entertainment value of these games will ensure they are still played even if they pay out slightly fewer tickets than the other machines.

Fast games which have a low skill factor and high jackpots should also be set to pay out less tickets because they attract the "gamblers" who only want to accumulate as many tickets as quickly as they can. Machines like this will siphon revenue from other games in the centre if you're not careful.

On the other hand, difficult games which quickly swallow up

The Planet Earth machines with prize payout units built on have also proven a boon to redemption operators

player's money may be set on 35 to 40% to give them a fair go.

When determining percentage payouts there is a fine line between making as much profit as possible and making sure players feel they are getting a fair return. If your customers believe they are getting "ripped off", they won't come back.

"*Do not become greedy in this business. Greed is lack of success,*" warns Skip Doyle, president of Doyle International.

MERCHANDISE PRICES

One of the most common and tempting mistakes made by redemption operators is to mark up the merchandise. This is where a redemption operation differs from a retail store - instead of making profit on merchandise, operators make their money on their games.

As around 10% of tickets "walk out the door" and are never redeemed, most operations are only paying out around 25% of their gross takings. This means that by the time players have won enough tickets to earn a prize, they will have spent about 4 times as much as what the item actually cost. In other words, you have realised a 400% mark-up on your merchandise.

Most operators mark-up by 10-20% just to cover tax and freight costs. If you add any more than this to the cost of the items, players will

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be spending 6 to 8 times what they would normally have to in a retail outlet - and that's too much.

People are willing to pay four times as much when they are getting the entertainment value of the redemption machines as well, but any more than that and they will start to feel ripped off.

And rightly so.

CHOOSING GAMES

There are so many redemption games out on the market today that a newcomer to the industry would be forgiven for not knowing where to start. While each trade show brings a new batch of games, you have probably realised that most are just re-packaged versions of the old, tried and true game types.

This leaves operators with lots of choices as many companies will be offering different versions of the same game.

While game polls can give you an indication of what is a high earning game, they aren't as accurate as they are for other types of amusement equipment. This is because game polls only tell you which games had the most money in the cash box, but not the percentage payout.

This can be misleading because any game will perform well if it is paying out a lot of tickets - but it doesn't mean it's making a profit. So check out the game polls by all means but don't rule out a game just because it's not rated highly.

There are, however, several other factors to be taken into account and all are just common sense.

As redemption games have such a long working life, the reliability of the machine is very important. The only way to get this sort of information is to speak to other operators and find out which machines have the least down time. They might only be minor failures, but until a minor break down is fixed, the machine is not operating or earning.

The other obvious thing to do is shop around and pay attention to the price of equipment. Your objective is to achieve the best possible ROI and paying more does not always mean that you will make more money.

Also check out the machine's ability to be programmed. As discussed before, to get the most out of your redemption games you need to test and fine tune the percentage payout on each machine and you want this to be a simple process.

Finally, don't underestimate the attraction of competition. It is essential to have at least some machines where more than one person can play at a time because redemption centres often attract families and groups. A few of the same games banked together normally increases earnings and it's even better if these games can be linked so players can compete against each other.

Games which provide jackpots also increase play and excitement. Every time one of the games is played, another ticket is registered in the jackpot and to win it, a player has to execute a set sequence of events. If the jackpot hasn't been won for a while, it can be worth as much as 1,000 tickets!

Of course, it's best not to have the game dispense that many tickets. Most machines sound a bell to let attendants know the jackpot has been won. A voucher is then written out for the correct amount of tickets and the machine clears itself.

SECURITY

A medium sized redemption centre can have $20,000 worth of merchandise sitting in it at any one time and pay out between $50,000 to $60,000 worth of prizes each year. When you consider that, your merchandise is definitely an asset worth guarding closely.

So for that matter, are your tickets. Both these things have to be closely tracked to make sure they correspond to the money in the cash register at the end of the day.

The easiest way by far is to have a computer program to record all transactions. This can be simple spread sheet program or a dedicated redemption software system complete with bar codes.

Bar codes allow redemption counter attendants to just wand the prizes as they give them out and the computer will automatically update the inventory, tell the attendant how many tickets are needed, and record the transaction so it can be checked against the meters in the machines and/or ticket shredders later on.

Regular customers can also be given membership cards with bar codes which allows the computer to call up all their details, including the number of tickets they have on file. This saves the player from having to carry the tickets back and forth between his home and the redemption centre.

There are also many excellent management systems which don't use bar codes. Instead, each type of merchandise has a 3-digit code which is typed into the computer every time that particular prize is redeemed.

A good software management system will computerise redemption inventory control, warehouse control, point of sale systems, and track all game income and ticket payout. If game meter readings are recorded regularly, a computer system should be able to pi point if you have a security problem.

Of course you *can* keep these sorts of records manually but it is much more time consuming and nowhere near as accurate.

Cranes and games like the very good earner, Spida Strika must be kept well loaded and can also be used to move excess counter stock or 'stale' lines by mixing it with 'hot' merchandise

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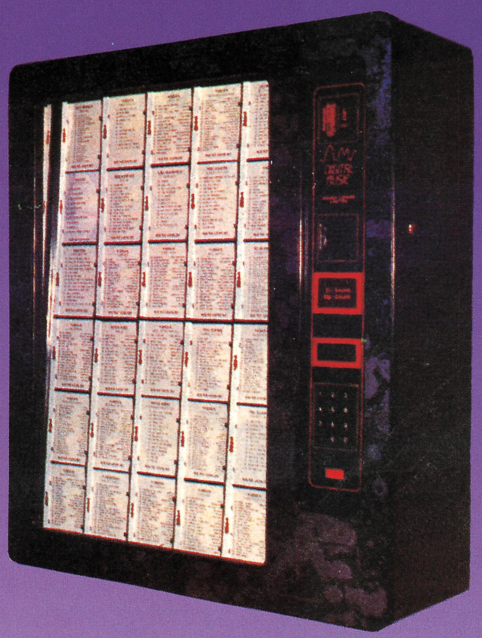

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It's amazing how many operators refuse to spend a couple of thousand dollars on a software management system which will look after their whole centre, but they don't think twice about spending three or four times as much on a single game!

Counting and disposing of tickets can also be a time consuming job if you don't have the right equipment. The easiest way to handle tickets is probably to weigh them. Scales today are extremely accurate and it 's much quicker.

Visit what Trade Shows you can, check the games out yourself and talk to the people that make them

Tickets should be treated in the same way as cash because, in effect, that is what they are. All tickets are numbered sequentially so keep a log of which numbers have been removed from the storeroom. After they have been redeemed the tickets should be destroyed so they can't be re-used. Kids will search through your rubbish bins if they think they will find tickets.

Ticket shredders are the most common method used and the non-resettable, permanent meter in the shredder will help you keep track of the number of tickets redeemed.

There are other simple things which can be done to decrease the loss of merchandise. Keep your staff honest by letting them know that you have a security system in place and make sure all the prizes, especially the high end items, are visible but out of reach of the customers.

Making the redemption counter area a step higher than the rest of the centre lets your employees have a better view of what players are doing. Problem customers are only attracted to areas where they think they can't be seen.

CONCLUSION

As you are probably aware, redemption can be a lucrative business but it's also hard work. Like with all retail businesses you have to be innovative because customers are fickle and always searching for something new.

You are never going to learn all you need to know about redemption from an article like this and we acknowledge that we've only skimmed the surface here. To keep your operation fresh and exciting, you need as many sources of ideas as possible.

As well as reading your traditional trade magazines like Cash Box, why not look through an issue of a retail trade publication or a magazine servicing the toy industry.

Attend trade shows and go along to as many seminars as possible. Make contacts with other operators in other areas and swap ideas and information. Listen to suggestions from players and employees. Check out your competition - you don't want to be a carbon copy of them but you may pick up some ideas worth trying...

And that's the essence of operating redemption well - experimenting and finding what works best for you. Try new merchandise, try new ways of presenting that merchandise, try different percentage payouts and ticket values, just don't be afraid to try new things.

As most of your competitors will have the same games and similar merchandise to you, the way to gain a competitive edge is at the retail level. And that comes down to presentation, and more importantly, service.

Just like you go back to shops where you are well treated, players of all ages will come back to a redemption centre where they are well treated. Make sure the attitude of your staff is right, that they smile, don't hassle customers unnecessarily over payouts and be quick and efficient in concluding any transaction with customers.

Good service will always give you the edge over your competitors

Says Sandy Adler, co-director of midway operations at Circus Circus: *"I don't care how pretty your redemption centre is, how new the machines are, I don't care how great your payout is, how terrific the selection of prizes is - if you don't give customers good service they're not going to come back.*

"Where good service comes into play is when your customer goes up to your redemption counter. Don't make players wait, make sure the last exposure to your centre is a pleasant one."

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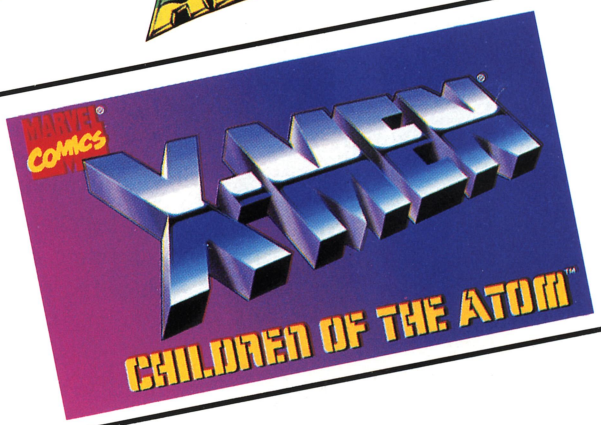

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What's New, What's Hot, in Redemption

NEW!

American Sammy's *Krazy Bowl* just got 'krazier' with the addition of full ticket dispensing facilities. What was being touted a good street piece as a straight video game, *Krazy Bowl* now becomes a full redemption game and opens up many more avenues for the operator.

Considering that the game was taking pretty good money just as a video, the addition of tickets should make it a real goer and it can be put together quite economically as Sammy are selling it as a kit, an update to the original version, or as a new fully built up 25" machine.

In *Krazy Bowl with Tickets*, tickets are awarded on score with bonus tickets awarded for strikes, the better the player the more tickets he gets, but the ticket payout remains adjustable at all times.

Available as either Trackball or joystick controlled, Krazy Bowl which has shown it can earn in bars should now prove a good addition to Entertainment Centres and other establishments where redemption facilities are available.

NEW!

A new wheel game, *Triple Play* from Coin Concepts is an old Midway concept that is ideally suited to modern day redemption.

Players are out to pick three numbers and stop the three wheels at the numbers selected, which all sounds easy enough, but don't kid yourself on that point, it's as frustrating as any good redemption game should be and needs a fair degree of skill.

Triple Play has good sound effects, adjustable awards and a one to five coin multiple that allows players to win up to 1000 tickets.

Coin Concepts also have a new adult game titled *Over the Rainbow* which features adult themed graphics.

Over the Rainbow is similar in style to CCI's other new release, Triple Play. It's definitely aimed at older players with its flamboyant, adult-themed graphics and its slot styled appearance. Coin Concepts say that the game has proven its attraction with adults.

HOT!

We've written a bit about this guy and it's all been good as we think we've got a hot one in ICE Inc's *Cyclone.*

You can learn a lot just from watching players reactions to a game and when you see them playing this one and listen to them, it's not hard to work out that you're looking at something pretty special. Fully electronic and with no moving parts, *Cyclone* is simply a light racing around the perimeter of the playfield that players try and catch between the two neon arcs at their playing station.

There's heaps of added value in the three player stations (at basically the price of many single player machines) and the clever design of the cabinet which allows the game to be used either as a centre piece or up against a wall.

NEW!

Fred Flintstones Memory Match is a new video redemption game from Coastal Amusements that looks an ideal game for Family Centres.

The game use the Flintstones characters under license and requires players to memory match pictures to complete the puzzles that result in tickets being awarded. It uses authentic Flintstone voices and music and is a piece that younger players would have to be attracted to in FEC's

What's New, What's Hot, in Redemption

Coastal Amusements also have another very good, new game in the roll down, *Speedball Rally* which has turned in some very imposing figures over the last couple of months in redemption centres and FEC's. *Speedball Rally* has a lot more depth in it than a lot of roll down games and looks set for a very healthy future.

Coastal have a great range of top earning redemption games which apart from their own designs, include the Harry Levy made pushers and games from the UK, like Feed Fido and others

NEW!

Car Toon Racin is a new two-player "pinball" race game from the highly respected Skeeball Inc, which has shown good tests results at sites throughout the USA and the Pacific Rim.

The game's appeal comes from its two action packed pinball playfields which have real pinball stationary targets, jet bumpers, flippers and a high speed loop ramp shot. Players race their *Car Toon* "hot rods" by triggering pinball targets representing different rates of speed and the competitive nature of the game appeals to players of all ages.

Car Toon Racin features colourful graphics and a sound package which includes rock music, drag racing sound effects and vocals from the race announcer

HOT!

Skeeball Inc also have the excellent *Skeeball Lightning* game on the market and this game has breathed a new freshness into the rock solid game of Skeeball, *Lightning* comes into the "must have" category for redemption centres.

HOT!

Pogger is a simple merchandiser which lets operators take advantage of the pog craze which has swept the west coast of America and is now moving into many other countries. The machine is a 4-player rotary which dispenses pogs, milkcaps, slammers and kinis to skilful players.

The prizes are all collectable items which have great value to children and the game itself is simple and highly entertain-

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What's New, What's Hot, in Redemption

ing. There is also a play till you win option to keep players happy.

According to Lazer-Tron, a *Pogger* unit in Southern California earned over $22,000 during its first 7 weeks on location. So for all those adults wondering how a machine dispensing printed bottle caps can earn money - take note!

Pirates Gold, a fast paced coin drop game has been a real money spinner for operators all around the world since its release last year.

Players try to guide their coins through pins into target holes further down the playfield. Tickets are earned for every target hit - and if they manage to hit all six targets, and spell out the word "PIRATE", they win the jackpot.

As *Pirates Gold* is a quick game, Lazer-Tron has ensured that players fell like they've got their money's worth by adding a play-till-you-win feature. If they player's coin does not go into one of the targets or the treasure chest, the coin is returned to them to be played again.

NEW!

Benchmark Entertainment has two token roll down games called *Golden Goose* and *Roll for Gold*. The games have a rotating wheel with various numbers on it and players have to time their coin drop to hit the required numbers.

The interesting development made by Benchmark is a skill gaming version of *Golden Goose* designed for the UK market. This machine was shown at ATEI on the Direct Machine Distributors Booth, while the ticket only redemption model

could be seen on the Cromptons stand.

The gaming version of *Golden Goose* has a slot-styled hopper for coins in/coins out play and a digital display. Besides the single-coin UK version, Benchmark has also adapted *Golden Goose* in a three-coin model for use in Belgium, Japan and Indian casinos.

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What's New, What's Hot, in Redemption

NEW!

Data East's new "whacking" game, *Save the Guppy* has a really cute theme. Instead of just bashing everything that moves which is the case in most of these mallet games, DE have created a bit of a storyline which kids should appreciate.

In the centre is a cute little guppy fish and he is surrounded by large, vicious looking turtles. As the turtles reach out to eat the guppy, players have to give them a good whack and save the fish.

The cabinet graphics are excellent and while *Save the Guppy* is only a minor variation on the old, but popular, whacking-style game, it's a difference that should make it stand out from the many other games of this type.

The Mask is Data East's latest coin rolldown game and it has a very hot theme.

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DATA EAST
NEW LINE CINEMA
The MASK, a novelty game so hot it's SSSMOKIN'!

Licensed from the recent, and extremely popular movie, *The Mask* has some excellent playfield features, including a lime green Mask face at the back.

Players have to try and roll their coins into various playfield targets and there are bonuses and jackpots for doing such things as rolling coins into the Mask or spelling out the films catch cry "SSSMOKIN".

The bright colours and artwork on the machine are nothing short of attention grabbing and overall, *The Mask* is a very attractive piece.

HOT!

One aspect of redemption we haven't had much room to discuss in this issue is redemption in street locations and centres which don't have the room or traffic flow to warrant a dedicated redemption centre.

One affordable way to get redemption into such locations is with prize dispensing machines like the *Dinowin* machine from Planet Earth. This unit combines a *Dinoscore* coin shooting game with a prize dispenser. Tickets won from the game can then be redeemed for prizes from the same unit.

It also has an optional ticket eater, built-in change machine and a customer buy-in feature which allows players to make up the difference in cash or to just buy a prize outright.

The *Dinoscore* machines have been in the market for long enough now and have returned some astronomical figures in redemption centres and large arcades. It remains one of the best and most consistent earners in redemption.

Now with the *Dinowin* unit, that success can be taken into street locations, bowling centres, movie theatres, skating centres and other locations with limited space, where the game has already shown it can perform just as well as it has been doing in redemption centres.

NEW!

Prolific game maker Lazer-Tron Inc have two new games, *Wheelin-N-Dealin* and a *1 Player Pogger.*

Game play on *Wheelin-N-Dealin* gives players 3 attempts to stop the spinning hands on desired slots. The hands spin in opposite directions over what looks like a clock face, but instead of numbers,

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What's New, What's Hot, in Redemption

there are series of marked areas, each worth a set amount of tickets.

The aim is to accumulate as many tickets as possible by making the hands stop on high-scoring squares. There are also a few hazards in "Bankrupt" and "Lose A Spin" slots, something like the timeless TV show "Wheel of Fortune".

Following the success of their 4-player *Pogger* rotary, Lazer-Tron have now released this compact, 1-player merchandiser for locations with limited space.

Pogs are still enormously popular in some regions and children love the simple but entertaining challenge of trying to knock pogs and slammers off the rotary.

Just in case the pog craze ever dies out, Lazer-Tron have also made sure that their unit remains useful to operators. The cabinet can easily be converted into a candy/bulk merchandiser or act as a "play-till-you-win" candy merchandiser.

HOT!

There wouldn't be many redemption operators who are not aware of the awesome earning power of Sound Leisure's brilliant game, *Spida Strika*, but though it's capable of earning some quite incredible money, *Spida Strika* has to be worked considerably harder than a lot of games for operators to reap the full benefits.

Though you can get away with a bit of slackness in other machines that carry their own prizes like cranes, etc, you need to keep this one really well loaded at all times or you're going to miss out on a lot of money that should be yours.

There's also a need to percentage the game to a reasonable payout as *Spida Strika* can virtually *eat* players money

HOT!

You have to look out for the little kids these days and Ice Inc are certainly doing that with games like *Mini Dunxx*, a great looking and solid performing kids Basketball game that will give years of good service and *The Flintstones*, a kids redemption Pinball type game that is making it's mark all over the world..

HOT!

For the physical players, soccer kicking games are pretty popular and there's a couple of excellent ones on the market currently. Jaleco have *World PK Soccer* which combines video with the physical in a brilliant way and though it has it's share of fun elements it's a game that holds particular appeal to the better players (or goal kickers) and we've seen some get extremely serious when playing it, giving the impression that they were using the machine as a type of practice simulator.

Harry Levy's *Penalty Kick* on the other hand is more of a game for all types of player, the serious can get their kicks (pun intended) and the fun player can get theirs.

Ideal for Family type centres and indeed all types of entertainment facility,

games like *Penalty Kick* will hold their appeal with kids of all ages, and a lot of dads, as long as the game of Soccer is being played.

NEW!

Turf Champ is a good looking and colourful coin game that is themed on the ageless "Sport of Kings"

It's a simple and quick game that players can play with up to seven coins and win up to 1000 tickets.

We've seen some excellent reports on this one and Bromley also have the excellent *Wheel'em In* game that's doing some great business in the USA.

As always with these things there are a lot of games we simply can't fit in, but as regular readers know, Cash Box has a continuing Redemption section that constantly brings the new and the hot products to notice.

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Redemption

COVER STORY

The SMART Team .....Get SMARTER!

When we started this magazine a bit over a year ago, a well known editor of another journal looked at the first edition, openly admired the quality, and then said *"OK, that's great, but it's only one issue, now you've got to keep doing it"*

Good words, *one splash does not make a wave*, and the same principle applies to many things, particularly coin-op games and equipment.

A manufacturing company can make money out of one good product, but will never be known as a top class manufacturer until it can keep turning out good products.

And the subject of this brief tribute, Smart Industries Corp of Des Moines, Iowa, have clearly shown time and time again, that they can do that, they've been turning out top line coin-op products since 1985 when they produced the first of over 25 games and products that have found favour with operators and players all around the world.

At this month's ACME they will release two more new products to go with their already incomparable range and if you can find a bookmaker in Reno who will take your bet, have a few bucks on both of them being winners.

Smart Industries have now added an excellent coin pusher, titled *Rags to Riches* to their product range and it's a game that will attract plenty of interest. *Rags to Riches* is an upright unit with a similar footprint to a video game and can pay out in either tickets, tokens or coin depending on the legalities in any particular State or region. It's a good looking piece that will fit into all types of location, but should be particularly attractive to street operators.

The second new product that Smart will be showing is the *Smart Ticket Center* and we expect this one to become a standard "piece of furniture" in redemption centres and FEC's all over the world.

The *Ticket Center* is a high volume, ticket acceptor/shredder that prints out receipts for customers for subsequent redeeming at the Redemption Counter. It protects the location from reuse of redemption tickets and takes the pressure off counter attendants in counting and discarding redeemed tickets.

There is no limit to the number of machines that the *Smart Ticket Center* can service and it will accept, count, cut and separate every individual ticket or consecutive tickets, with no limit on the amount.

The machine is fitted with a Bar Code reader which can effectively eliminate the usage of 'foreign' tickets when the location uses Bar Coded tickets. It also enables a location to use different value tickets as the Bar Code reader will identify them.

In addition the *Ticket Center* features a double coin mech to enable customers to 'Buy up' to a prize value, a receipt printer, an alphanumeric readout, voice messages, an alarm system, complete bookkeeping and self diagnostic program. Options are Bill acceptors and a 220 VAC power system.

So the good new products keep rolling out from the Smart team, adding to a range that includes the excellent *Smart Redemption Center* which has met with an incredible response since it's entry into the market, the universally popular redemption games like *Big Bertha, Buddy Bear* and *Toss 'Em* and the splendid range of cranes and sporting games.

There's a lot of depth in this fine company and we'll do a feature on Smart Industries and their full range of products in the near future.

Meanwhile, *get smart,* and check out the Smart products.

John Caltrider, Mike Smith and Gordon Smart seen here at IAAPA where the Smart Redemption Center continued it's stunning success.

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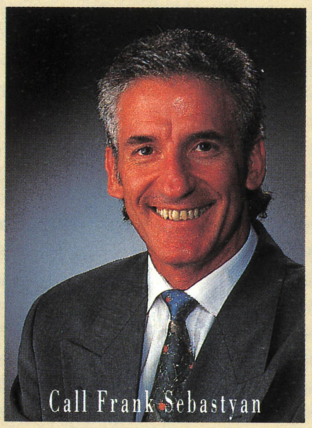

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TAE

SNK were one of the few major companies to exhibit, seen here is Keiki Ihara, MD of SNK Asia Ltd

Last month, from February 8-12, the Taiwan Amusement Exhibition was held at the CETRA Exhibition Hall in Taipei. This was the second expo organised by the Taiwanese public relations firm Creative International Co on their own.

In 1993 two trade shows were co-sponsored by Creative International and Taiwan Slot Magazine. These two companies have since gone their separate ways, with Taiwan Slot establishing their own trade show and Creative International producing their own trade magazine called Taiwan Amusement Express.

There has been some debate within the industry as to whether two separate trade shows are really required - and whether both will actually survive. And looking back on TAE '95, it seems as if there are grounds for such speculation.

The trade show was a disappointment, even to the organisers. Two of Taiwan's largest amusement industry companies, Paco and Entropy pulled out of the show; the gaming machine manufacturer BTR did not exhibit; and even IGS, one of the country's few successful amusement (i.e. non-gaming) machine manufacturers seemed uncommitted with a small booth and no games on display. IGS did, however, provide a number of their Alien Challenge games for a video game competition held at one end of the hall and another distributor had some Lord of Gun games on display.

Creative International's Shirley Fang believed that some companies pulled out of TAE because of a large multimedia expo held in December of last year. This trade show was apparently open to coin-op companies and a number of them took the opportunity to release their products before the Chinese New Year holiday season.

Below; Billy Chao of Amusewell Technology shows his new gambling game Water Motorcycle that *just happens to look like an amusement machine.*
Bottom: Part of the show floor crowded with members of the public

The Chinese New Year also had another negative effect on TAE - it meant Taiwan Customs was closed for a week just prior to the show. For those overseas exhibitors that didn't ship their products early enough, it meant empty stands for the first couple of days. The problem was mainly limited to the international trade magazines, although Laser Storm were also waiting for their brochures to arrive.

The first day of TAE '95 was quite busy and although it wasn't meant to be open to the public, there were quite a few young kids running around. For international visitors, the first day represented the best opportunity for conducting business.

While many exhibitors were still setting up when the expo opened, they had time to talk about their products and the surrounding noise levels weren't too high.

But the next four days of the exhibition were open to the public and were nothing short of chaotic.

There are some valid reasons for opening the show to the public in Taiwan as the industry there has a bit of an unsavoury reputation. By letting people see the industry in a professional context, the show organisers hoped to raise the industry's profile and promote it as a well-organised and professional business.

Of course, the more cynical among the industry also pointed to

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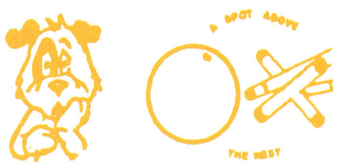

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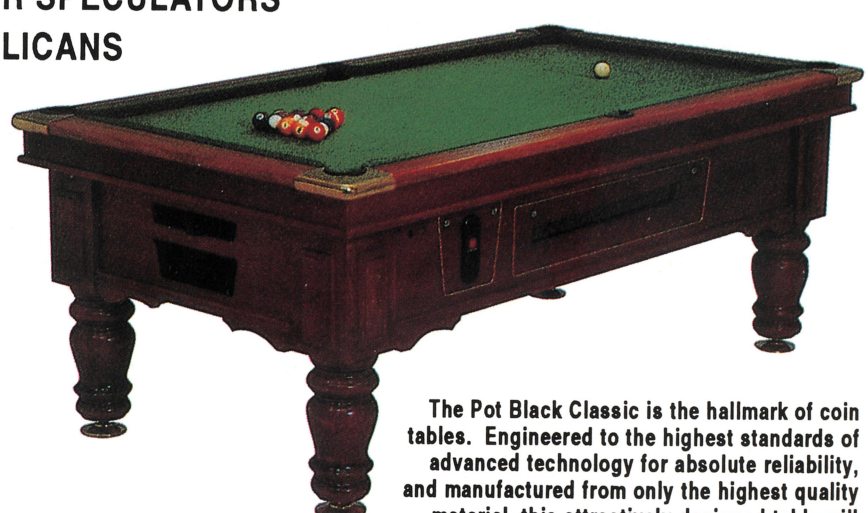

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TAE

the NT$150 (approx.US$5.50) entry fee as a major incentive on the part of the organisers.

Whatever the case, it did seem a bit excessive to have four public days and only one trade-only day. Because of the Chinese New Year, the school kids were on holidays and with thousands of them swarming around the exhibition centre, the noise reached unbearable levels.

Some exhibitors, like SNK, took advantage of this by showing their consumer games platforms. SNK had several Neo Geo CD consumer systems on display as well as their latest coin-op games like Samurai Shodown 2 and Super Sidekicks 3

The company was also running a competition with a home game system as first prize. Players had to fill out a questionnaire to enter and it seemed that every boy in Taipei under the age of 17 was somewhere around the SNK stand filling out one of these forms.

For those trying to talk business with the SNK sales people, it was nearly impossible to get through the crowd and if make it to the booth, you could hardly hear each other anyway.

SNK's Keiki Ihara said they came to Taiwan not so much to sell their products as to demonstrate them and gauge the response. Taiwan is SNK's third largest market in the region after Japan and Korea, and according to Mr Ihara, the company considers the Taiwan market to be as important as the USA.

Because they had expected the crowds, SNK was not dismayed that TAE '95 was open to the public. In fact, they used the opportunity to gain useful customer information - the answers given on the SNK competition entry form/questionnaire were being used by the company to develop its marketing strategy.

SNK were one of the few major manufacturers to attend TAE '95. In reality, the expo was a domestic trade show with only a few foreign companies specifically targeting the Taiwan market, the only exceptions.

Among these companies was the American laser tag manufacturer Laser Storm (previously known as Space Sport). The company's Chinese-speaking representative, Porcia Silverberg, was quite happy with the response she was getting, despite the crowds and the noise.

Porcia had been sent to Taiwan with the objective of selling one laser system in Taiwan so the industry there could see an example of an up-and-running centre.

Laser Storm is one of the few laser game manufacturers to actually develop game themes for their customers. The latest is "Circuit Commandos", a game in the style of "Tron" where players enter a computer system to try and kill a computer virus.

According to Porcia, the laser game industry is absolutely booming in SE Asia. Laser Storm, itself, has recently appointed an agent in Singapore and the company has already sold 20 units in Korea.

On the product development front, Laser Storm has entered into a partnership with Togo, the Japanese amusement ride manufacturer. Togo was the company that helped Namco develop its interactive roller coaster, Tower of Druaga, for its Wonder Eggs theme park.

It seems as if Togo and Laser Storm plan to create something similar - an interactive dark ride where riders shoot at targets with their laser guns. It certainly sounds interesting.

There were also two baseball batting cages on display at TAE and these were presented jointly by the foreign manufacturers and a local distributor.

The Power Alley video batting system by Video Baseball Inc and the Virtual Batting machine by Sunsoft both attracted a lot of attention, highlighting the popularity of American sports in the Asian region.

Video Baseball Inc showed their new Power Alley Jr, a smaller batting cage suitable for FECs. Their earlier model was the same length as used in official baseball games. For baseball enthusiasts, the Power Alley game is exciting because it uses live footage of some of the toughest pitchers in the Major League. All the Pro pitchers have apparently been filmed in real game situations at Major League stadiums.

A life size image of the pitcher appears on the screen at the end of the cage and as the ball is released in the film image, a real ball is fired out at the batter. The cage is set up in semi-darkness and the special soft ball has a fluorescent glow to it.

Video Baseball Inc recently won a five-year contract with the Australian firm Village Nine Leisure who are planning to develop sports themed FECs throughout Australia and South East Asia. VNL has committed to 12 cages and Video Baseball Inc already has a number of them located in Taiwan.

Sunsoft's Virtual Batting ma-

Below: International Game Systems provided their Alien Challenge games for the public's video game competition Bottom: Porcia Silverberg, Laser Storm Inc's representative in Asia

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TAE

chine was quite similar although the video image of the pitcher wasn't live film footage. The batting cage is manufactured in Japan and costs around $30,000 although the company plans to assemble the machine with local components in the future to reduce the cost.

According to Kenji Yoshioka, the Sunsoft representative at the show, the company is still devoted to developing video games but they also see a bright future for FEC attractions which really draw in the crowds. Virtual Batting was Sunsoft's first machine of this type but the company is now working on soccer themed version. A prototype of this game will be shown at AOU.

Ten of the Virtual Batting units have already been installed in Taiwan and Sunsoft is also targeting Korea for future sales.

All three foreign companies mentioned above said they received a pleasing response from the show. Among the vast numbers of public in the hall there were apparently a few serious buyers for the large FEC attractions, mainly representatives shopping malls and bowling centres.

The only other foreign companies to exhibit at TAE were the two Japanese firms: K&, who sell second hand amusement games; and Buildup Co who produce computer images, films and a particularly charismatic animatronic dinosaur.

Called Virtual Saurus, the realistic dinosaur amused crowds all day long by roaring and answering questions from the crowd. It was extremely realistic and a skilled operator even made the dinosaur turn and look at the person it was speaking to.

The images and films produced by Buildup up were also very impressive and these skills should prove useful to Sega who apparently have a 50% stake in the company.

Of the 50 or so Taiwanese exhibitors at the show, more than 80% had gaming machines of every imaginable type on display. This is a rather bizarre situation when you consider that gambling is actually prohibited in Taiwan. On the streets of Taipei there are amusement centres everywhere with a few amusement games out the front and a room full of gaming devices inside.

The gambling machines at TAE came in all sizes and forms - from large multi-player stations to simple, single person betting games. Obviously none of the machines at TAE actually paid out but this didn't stop expo visitors, adults and children alike, from spending hours pressing buttons and laying bets.

The number of exhibitors with this type of equipment indicates how lucrative gaming is in Taiwan, unfortunately to the detriment of genuine amusement machines. More and more companies are moving into this area, often just adapting foreign games to the Chinese market.

A lot of the floor space used was filled with gaming machines of various types, all of which are supposedly illegal in Taiwan

Leo Wang of BTR, one of Taiwan's major gaming device manufacturers, decided *not* to exhibit at TAE precisely for this reason. He says he was afraid that local companies would copy his games and ideas.

Leo also wanted to keep his company's reputation clean by only selling to legal, foreign markets. And as TAE turned out to be a largely domestic show, he feels he made the right decision in not exhibiting.

While many companies claimed to be only producing gaming machines for export, there were some obvious and innovative exceptions. One of these was called Water Motor Cycle where players would bet on the winner of a jet ski race.

The cabinet has been constructed to look like an amusement game driving cabinet and there is even a ticket dispenser attached to the game to make it look like an amusement machine. At a quick glance, it doesn't look like a gaming device at all!

Of the companies showing amusement only machines, Entron and Subsino stood out. Entron are the Taiwan distributors for Banpresto, Jaleco, Sigma, Taito and Human Corp, among others.

The company also builds its own cabinets and exports power suppliers and the like. Entron had a Jaleco redemption game called Pokapoka-Nyango on display - it was a mallet (or whacking) game that has no English name. Entron manufactures the game under license from Jaleco in Taiwan and their version has Chinese text.

According to Entron's Andy Chang, redemption is becoming increasingly popular in Taiwan, especially in the upmarket centres in shopping malls. Redemption should have a good future in Taiwan if the government ever cracks down on gaming because it is actually legal.

The other interesting game Entron had on display was called Mario Undokai, a Banpresto game using the famous mario Brothers licensed from Nintendo. This game was extremely popular with the children and was unique because players

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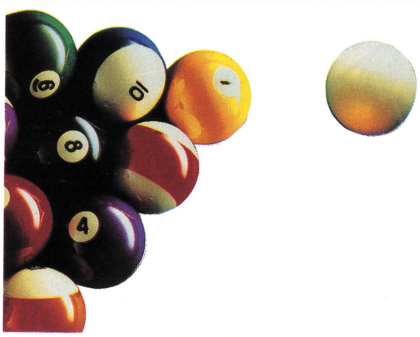

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controlled their game character with their feet. Four directional pads are placed on the floor under the video screen and players step on the arrow which represents the direction in which they want to move. Many players were actually working up a sweat!

Entron wants to take this game to international markets and are currently negotiating with Banpresto and Nintendo to obtain the right to do so.

Subsino had a number of recent games on their booth, including Namco's Cyber Commando and Banpresto's Ultra X Weapons. They also had a couple of Namco redemption pieces - Mosquito Attack, where players shoot at fluorescent mosquitos with an insect spray gun and a Whack-a-squid game that had no English name. Subsino also manufacture their own cabinets and gaming devices.

The company's stand was absolutely swamped with kids which made it impossible to talk to company executives. Hunter Wu, Subsino's marketing director, said he was disappointed with the show as it was very small and attracted a lot of public but not many genuine customers.

Redemption is gaining a big foothold in Asia and seen here is Andy Chang of Entron who manufacture this game under license from Jaleco

Namco's novelty Redemption game, *Mosquito Attack* on the Subsino stand attracted large crowds throughout the 4 days of the show

The only other current amusement machines at TAE were a Wurlitzer Casino jukebox on the Boyan stand and a Rock-ola juke along with a Virtua Fighter 2 and a Killer Instinct on the Lon Son Entertainment booth. Both these fighting games attracted large crowds.

Surprisingly, there were only a few exhibitors showing power suppliers and other spare parts. For international visitors who came to Taiwan to buy such things, TAE was a bit of a let down.

Supreme Exime Corp had a good range of buttons, joysticks, switches and power suppliers but there was hardly a monitor in sight.

Wee Chin Enterprises had their good looking OK Baby cabinets on display along with some cranes and a photo booth.

Otherwise, the exhibitors were a motley bunch of vendors with such bizarre things as laminators, hand bags, massage seats and muscle compresses. Creative International said they were given the impression that these companies were providing novelties and other redemption prizes and were as surprised as everyone else when they turned out to have absolutely nothing to do with the industry.

At first I wondered why these people would even want to be at an amusement machine exhibition but once the public entered the hall I realised why. The hand bag lady in particular sold a lot of merchandise and for her, it was just like having a stall at the Sunday markets!

While there were some unprofessional things about TAE, Creative International did organise a good seminar program for industry delegates. While most of the talks were in Chinese, seminars were given by representatives from Iwerks, Imax and Intergame and these were in English.

All in all, TAE '95 was a chaotic experience and while the few foreign exhibitors seemed to do fairly well out of it, overseas visitors would probably have been disappointed. The Taiwan exhibitors were obviously aiming for the domestic market as few companies had English-speaking personnel on hand and the large crowds and high noise level made it very hard to do business.

On top of that, the show was relatively small, with most exhibitors showing gaming machines aimed at the local market.

On the other hand, the show was probably beneficial to the local industry because it gave Taiwanese companies a chance to promote their products to the local population. And while the industry may still have an image problem, it is clear from the public attendance that amusement machines are enormously popular in the country.

In late news it appears the rift between TAE and TAM has been healed as TAE will now be organising the TAM show in June.

Stargate

Premier Technology

There comes a time in every game reviewers life when the butt must go on the line and this is one of those times.

Without anything other than half a dozen games on the machine, we're tipping Premier Technology's new Gottlieb Pinball *Stargate* to be a genuine blockbuster, a true blue hit, and a game that will convince the most avid Williams/ Bally supporter that Premier are now right up there with the very best of them in the art of creating hit Pinball games.

Totally awesome in our book, is *Stargate* which as it's name suggests is taken from the current box office hit movie starring Kurt Russel.

From the moment they shape up to it, players will know they have got a great Pinball game on their hands with this one, every type of player can get value out of it and if this writer is any judge, be scrambling to get more coin in it for another game.

The "hit and hope' type player will have a ball, but real Pinball players will think they are in Heaven as they will find every shot in the book catered for in this fine game.

OK, so you probably think the bloke who's writing this has flipped out or maybe got silver balls in his head instead of brains, well if this game doesn't wipe every Pinball game on the market at time of writing, *right off the map*, this old fool will stand up somewhere for all to see and eat every page of this magazine where *Stargate* has been raved about.

But don't hold your breath waiting for that, *Stargate* is a killer game, the best thing by far that Premier Technology have done and it's a real credit to the design and engineering teams that put it together.

Any manufacturer looking to topple this one will have to come up with a hell of a game.

Red Zone

Jaleco

Space prevents a full reveiw on this new Jaleco game, but we will have a good look at it next month.

Basically it's a race around the Tokyo highways and though it's pretty quick and fun to play, it's very hard to get enthused over after playing with the Namco and Sega toys, and we tend to think that many players will feel the same.

Though Jaleco obviously haven't got the resources for development that the big companies have, it would appear on looking at Red Zone, that they're going to have to find something extra if they wish to compete, even in the bottom end of the market

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New Games & Products

Lazer-Tron, the big US redemption game maker who are committed to releasing six new games this year are tipped to have a couple of hot ones for ACME this month.

SNK, who coasted through ATEI with Samurai Shodown 2 and Super Sidekicks 3 are also expected to have another big game for ACME

The Shadow Bally

There's some who are sprouting that this is the best Williams/Bally game since *Star Trek*, and though we'll reserve judgement on that, the reports on the Pinball's performance are a hell of a lot better than those on the movie of the same name.

The movie is a shocker, so bad that it even put the Pinball at a disadvantage with this reviewer, who had watched the wretched thing the night before ATEI opened and was still carrying bad vibes around when confronted with the game

But after all, we're not considering buying a movie here, it's the Pinball we're interested in and *The Shadow* has got several good features that should keep players interest, it's a great looking piece with a good game built in and we expect it to do pretty well

The Shadow is reported to be testing quite well in Australia as we write and apparently doing some pretty good business in the USA and parts of Europe where it's been in operation for some time, but it's not going to find life easy in what is now a very competitive market

Jackie Chan Kaneko

While many of the bigger companies appear to be giving conversion games a big miss, the smaller Kaneko have developed an excellent system board (the AX) and are busily building some good games around it.

This latest one, *Jackie Chan, Kung Fu Master* will be released at AOU and everything we've heard about it is good. The use of digitised images in the graphics and 3D graphics in the different background scenes is a distinct plus and the zooming in and out which is prompted by the movements of the characters, is very eye catching and effective.

Jackie Chan, a super star, martial arts exponent himself, supervised the making of the game and we believe that early testing has seen some excellent figures returned in what is a 'dull' Japanese market.

We think this game is well worth having a good look at and have a sneaky feeling that it's going to do good things for operators of conversion games.

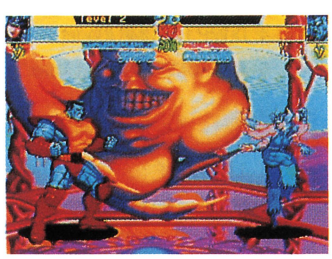
We'll keep an eye on *Jackie Chan, Kung Fu Master* and update in a few weeks time after it gets into the market and the players start rattling the old cash can.

X-Men Capcom

We wrote about Capcom's *X-Men, Children of the Atom,* when it was first released in Japan and had some reservations, but now that it's got out into the international market its doing some pretty good business and looks like being another winner for the big Japanese manufacturer.

Though X-Men is taken from the same bunch of comic book heroes that the Konami game of the same name used a couple of years ago, it's a very different game.

Capcom have built in some top class fighting combinations and kept it to a "one on one" game as against the 'all in' type of game that Konami built in their six player game



X-Men gives the impression that it can build up to greater heights and is a game well worth a good look at.

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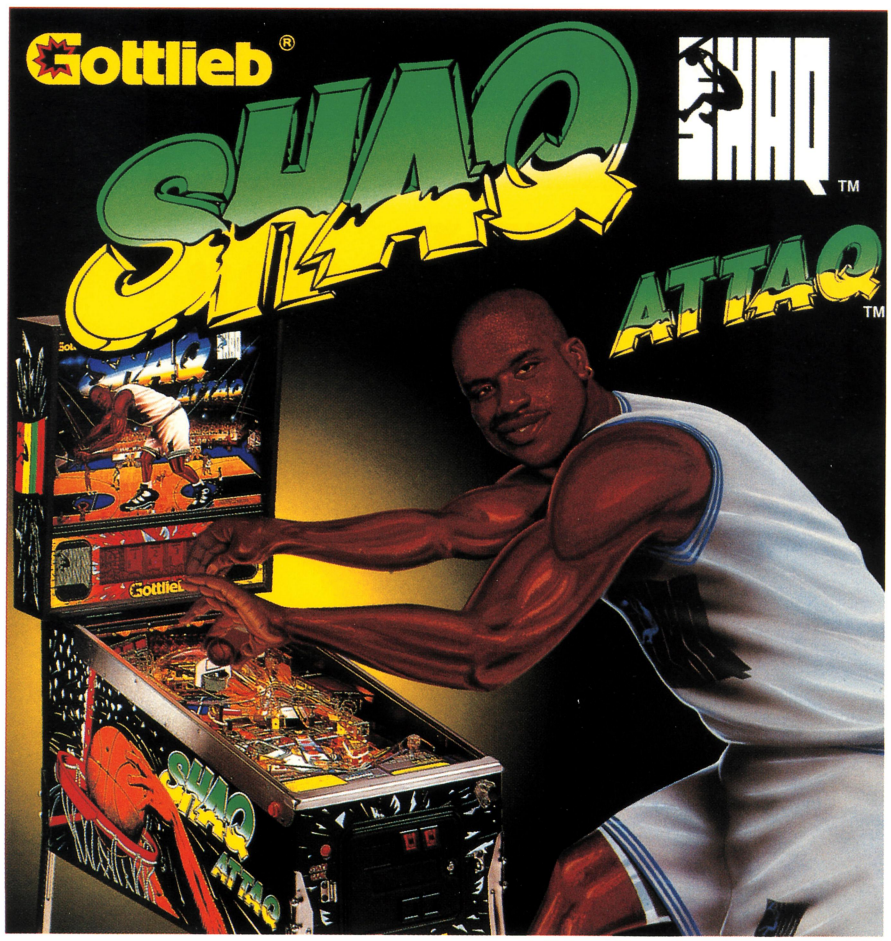

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New Games & Products

With driving games all the rage in video, the big '2', Sega and Namco appear to have the big dedicated driver market on their own, but don't be surprised if before this year is out, Capcom, Konami and maybe Atari, put out a strong challenge to their dominance

Super Sidekicks 3

SNK Neo Geo

We all know how good *Super Sidekicks 2* was, and still is in many places, well don't be surprised if this third game in the series is even better.

SNK have kept all the good stuff that was in the last game and added quite a few new features to Super Sidekicks 3 that make it an even better all round game.

Players have even better control of the on screen characters and more options and moves, the graphics and reality have been taken to another level, and they have given the game a built in excitement that will have players of all persuasions yodelling for more.

We've given another Soccer game, Konami's *Soccer SuperStars*, a big wrap elsewhere in this issue and mentioned the upcoming *Virtua Soccer* game from Sega, so the Soccer game market will not be an easy one to dominate, but for street operators in particular, *Super Sidekicks 3* is a steal at the price of Neo Geo games as it would be pretty good value at the current price of a full PCB game.

Sega Rally Championship

We could probably let the pictures do the talking here as all you really need to know is that this game is actually there. Operators are going to flock around it at the upcoming trade shows and local distributor outlets and providing it earns the sort of money that everyone expects it to, they'll be running out and buying as many of these as their bank managers will let them go into hock for.

Keeping things simple, *Sega Rally Championship* is *Daytona USA* on a rally track with the best rally cars that money can buy. If anything, it's better than Daytona, but as it's the second in the breed, it may not have the impact with players that the former game had, but there's little doubt that there's going to be a lot of money poured into these over coming months.

Though the big 50" model pictured will be first into the market and obviously do well, the real value for operators will come in the shape of the soon to be released, linked twin.

Sega Rally Champion is a game that's built for competition and like with *Daytona*, the linked model will prove the better value, unless of course you can afford to link a pair of the big guys.

Sega are not playing "talkies" with us so we can't confirm the price, but believe *Rally Champ* could be a modicum cheaper than *Daytona USA* was, certainly not dearer, and if that's correct, it's a welcome change for operators under a siege of higher and higher prices.

Make an appointment now with your bank manager and get a good spiel together, but if your spiel doesn't work, grab him, take him to the nearest *Rally Champ*, sit him in it and wind it up.....*as long as he's under 75, you'll get the money you need.*

New Games & Products

Whether it's a marketing ploy that's backfired or the game genuinely needs updating at frequent intervals, we don't know, but Atari/Time Warner aren't doing themselves any real favours with all these new ROMs for Primal Rage.

Operators that talk to us are not impressed with many scared off buying.

Dirty Harry

Williams

In the parochial German Pinball market one should never be surprised at anything that happens, but there was surprise when *Dirty Harry* was somehow awarded "The Pinball of the Show" at IMA, over such games as *Shaq Attaq, Frankenstein* and The *Shadow.*

The game's quite OK, but even the most dedicated Williams fans who would never dream of suggesting another brand was better, were unanimous in putting *The Shadow* in front of *Harry.*

The game itself is quite an attractive piece that will obviously draw players, but the complaint that has haunted several of the recent Williams Bally games, that the ball goes up the back out of sight and leaves the player twiddling his thumbs waiting for it to reappear, appears to be once again valid with this one and we have noticed over the past few models that players are getting irked with these lapses.

Dirty Harry will no doubt blow a few players away should earn his keep, possibly being better suited to pubs and bars than arcades.

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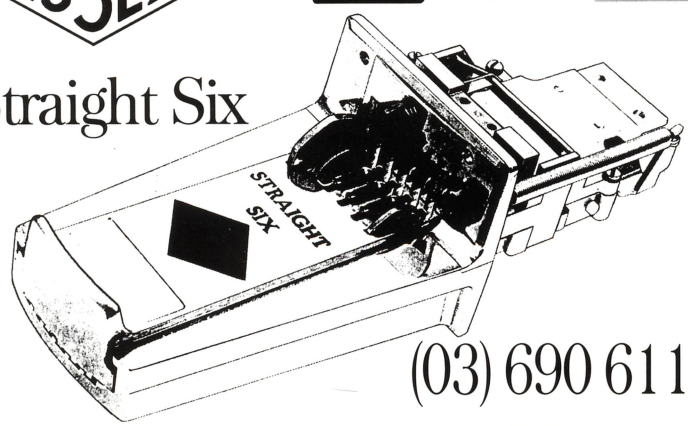

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Soccer SuperStars

Konami

Classed by many good judges as the best Soccer game ever made, Konami's *Soccer SuperStars* has a bit to live up to, but to date it has done just that and looks set for a very healthy life.

There is a bit of a dark cloud on the horizon for *SuperStars* in the shape of Sega's *Virtua Soccer* though, which was seen in uncompleted form at ATEI and IMA, and one would have to think that if on completion *Virtua Soccer* ends up as good as what the prototype indicated it would, all conventional Soccer games will have a battle on their hands to compete.

But that's further down the line, right now *SuperStars* is #1 and showing no signs of weakening. It's a game that allows players to do just about anything that can be done of a Soccer pitch and is developing an almost cult like following in many parts of Europe and Asia.

Operators who have got into the game are doing well all round, *Soccer SuperStars* is earning well in the old cash box and as it's sold as a conversion it's quite economical to buy.

Mille Miglia 2

Kaneko Co

Following what is becoming a genuine trend in this industry, this sequel game is expected to do much better than the original version, now that the addition of a linking system brings genuine competition into play.

The linking that can hook up four screens, makes it a really fun game and probably would have been enough on it's own, but Kaneko have done a lot more than that. *Mille Miglia 2* (or *Great 1000 Mile Rally 2* in some countries) boasts much larger and improved graphics, more detailed backgrounds and an upgraded steering system that will work with any of the common steering mechanisms, 360 Optical Sensor, 270 Optical Sensor or 270 Microswitch. And it can still be used with a joystick, though a good twin driving cabinet is the way to go.

In this one the performance of each car is different with individual cars being quicker, sliding better, braking better, etc and this also adds to some good racing. Kaneko and operators should do well out of *Mille Miglia 2*

UPDATE - Killer Instinct

Midway

There's little doubt that this fighting game with the enormous 'wraps' on it can take some good money, but operators we've spoken to are not one little bit impressed with the down time they are experiencing through inferior disc drives that have been supplied with the game.

There is apparently a replacement drive available now and that may appease operators and enable them to get the revenue that they should be getting out of this quite good game.

As was expected, *Killer Instinct* is frowned upon in many quarters for the level of violence, but there's no denying the players like the blood and guts as the game comes back to the field noticeably when it's run in low violence mode.

The other hassle of course is the rumour that Nintendo will put the game into the home market before much longer, which is unconfirmed, but a bit scary for potential buyers coupled with the bothersome disc drive problem.

Check out the new Rowe AMi, Eagle CD wall mounted Jukebox when you get a chance. Many feel it's one of the best things that the company has done for some time, and seeing that they are still a rather comfortable #1 in the USA and many other countries, that's a pretty good wrap

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GAME RATINGS

Japan

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Virtua Fighter 2
2 Tekken
3 X-Men (Capcom)
4 Virtua Fighter
5 Puzzle Bobble
6 Samurai Shodown 2
7 Soccer SuperStars
8 Crazy Cross

DEDICATED VIDEO

1 Virtua Fighter 2
2 Ace Driver
3 Ridge Racer 2
4 Sports Fishing
5 Virtua Cop
6 Point Blank
7 Daytona Twin
8 Ridge Racer DX

PINBALLS

1 Demolition Man
2 Star Trek
3 World Challenge Soccer
4 Royal Rumble
5 Addams Family

Hong Kong

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Soccer SuperStars
2 X-Men
3 Tekken
4 Puzzle Bobble
5 Bubble Symphony
6 Mad Shark
7 Super SFII Turbo
8 V Goal Soccer

DEDICATED VIDEO

1 Daytona
2 Virtua Cop
3 Virtua Fighter 2
4 Suzuka 8 Hours 2

PINBALLS

1 Maverick
2 World Challenge Soccer
3 Guns 'n Roses

United States

VIDEO UPRIGHT

1 Killer Instinct
2 Samurai Shodown 2
3 Lethal Enforcers II
4 Raiden DX
5 Gals Panic 2
6 Revolution X
7 Virtua Fighter
8 King of Fighters '94

DEDICATED VIDEO

1 Daytona USA
2 Cruis'n USA
3 Ridge Racer
4 T-Mek
5 Out Runners
6 Suzuka 8 Hours II
7 Fast Draw Showdown
8 Air Combat

PINBALLS

1 Shaq Attaq
2 Road Show
3 Star Trek
4 Addams Family
5 Maverick
6 Freddy Krueger
7 Guns 'n Roses
8 Rescue 911

Germany

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Puzzle Bobble
2 Samurai Shodown 2
3 Raiden DX
4 Tekken

DEDICATED VIDEO

1 Daytona Twin
2 Cruis'n USA
3 Ridge Racer
4 Killer Instinct

PINBALLS

1 Shaq Attaq
2 Freddy Krueger
3 Road Show
4 World Cup Soccer

Australia

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Raiden DX
2 King of Fighters '94
3 Bubble Symphony
4 Raiden II
5 Samurai Shodown 2
6 Virtua Fighter
7 Aero Fighter 2
8 Dark Stalkers

DEDICATED VIDEO

1 Daytona Twin
2 Virtua Fighter 2
3 Virtua Cop
4 Ridge Racer DX
5 Cruis'n USA
6 Daytona USA DX
7 Suzuka 8 Hours 2
8 Lethal Enforcers II

PINBALLS

1 Shaq Attaq
2 Freddy Krueger
3 Road Show
4 Star Trek
5 Addams Family
6 Maverick
7 World Cup Soccer
8 Guns 'n Roses

United Kingdom

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Raiden II
2 King of Fighters '94
3 Samurai Shodown
4 Soccer SuperStars
5 Great 1000 Mile Rally 2
6 Rise of the Robots
7 SFII Turbo
8 V-Goal Soccer

DEDICATED VIDEO

1 Daytona Twin
2 Virtua Cop
3 Virtua Fighter 2
4 Ridge Racer 2
5 Lethal Enforcers 2
6 Suzuka 8 Hours 2
7 Killer Instinct
8 Out Runners

PINBALLS

1 Shaq Attaq
2 World Cup Soccer
3 Road Show
4 Freddy Krueger
5 Star Trek
6 Addams Family
7 Guns 'n Roses

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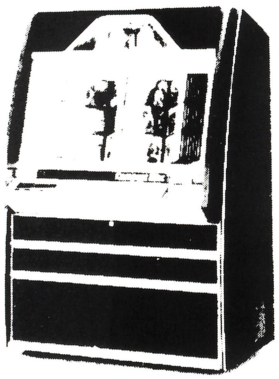

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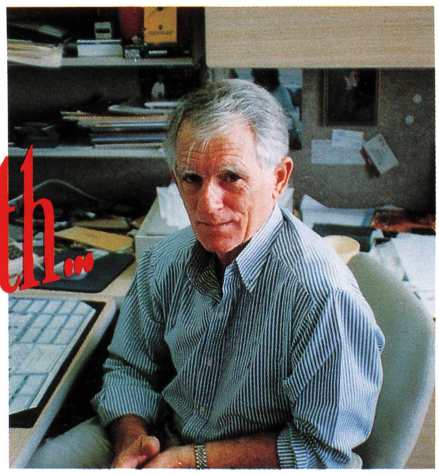

We've got a Politician down here that is forever telling his opposition that they *"should get out and talk to the cab drivers and learn a bit about real life"*

Well having had a bit of car trouble and done a bit of travelling in the last month or so, I've spent quite a bit of time in taxis and believe me, if the Politicians start learning from these guys, we've got really big problems. With the exception of the Chicago Iranians and the suicide freaks in downtown Cairo, cab drivers have the potential to end up with all the money in the world, if the world as we know it hangs around long enough.

You may reckon your Politicians rip you off with taxes, but they are novices compared to the average cab driver, and thank your lucky stars for that.

I've watched cabbies closely from all over the place and found they have a natural talent for picking a "mark" that would have to be the envy of every rip off merchant born, and they can pick a coin-op person from miles away, *they lovecoin-op, they genuinely think we're made of money!*

You probably never realised what an easy "mark" you were, standing there with your Capcom bag full of brochures, or reading your Sega folder while waiting for a cab. Some of you even wear Premier or Data East T Shirts on a cab rank for God's sake, and if by some chance you're not guilty of any of the above, you invariably get in the cab and mention things like ATEI, IMA, ACME, JAMMA.

They know what these things mean buddy, and in any language. They mean coin-op, and to a cab driver, coin-op means "mark" or easy money.

And the few cabbies who do not have the talents mentioned above are electronic genius's, they can make sealed meters do whatever they want. Like in Frankfurt, this cabbie picked us up at the airport in a bloody Mercedes, (and that really rubbed it in after I'd just had my own beloved Benz die on me) drove us straight down the expressway to our hotel with no traffic delays, no extra laps, just a quick and straight trip of about 15 minutes.

The minute I mentioned IMA the meter went into overdrive and read 57 marks at journeys ends, roughly US$40. Two days later we travel in another cab from hotel to airport, straight down the same expressway like before, *but with no Capcom bag and no mention of IMA*. The fare?.....26 marks.

And what about the Tokyo cabbies (read Kamikaze pilots), all I had was the name of the place and the address in English so having been caught before, I got the desk clerk at the hotel to write it down in Japanese for me to give to the driver.

I hand it to him and he looks at it, leers, and turns it upside down and looks at it again, then turns it to the side and back to where he started, mumbling and grinning all the time. *I was going to a Sega arcade.*

If I didn't know I had real problems with this guy seemingly not being able to read the Japanese instructions, the leer was a dead set giveaway. And I was right, $80 worth of problems, sitting in traffic half of the time with the driver singing along happily with the wireless and doing kamikaze laps for the rest of the time.

The distance between hotel and destination was in reality, four blocks, I know because I walked back.

Believe me, we're fortunate that comparing a Politician to a cabbie is like comparing a warm puppy to a Hot Dog, and we're doubly fortunate that the average Politician hasn't got the ability to learn, if they did use cabs, the cabbies would have a real picnic, but if ever you see a 'Poli' getting into a cab, grab him and drive him wherever he wants to go, just to be on the safe side.

And when you leave home to go to a trade show in an alien city, pack one of those plain brown paper shopping bags to put all your brochures in.

Those Capcom bags are good, but.....

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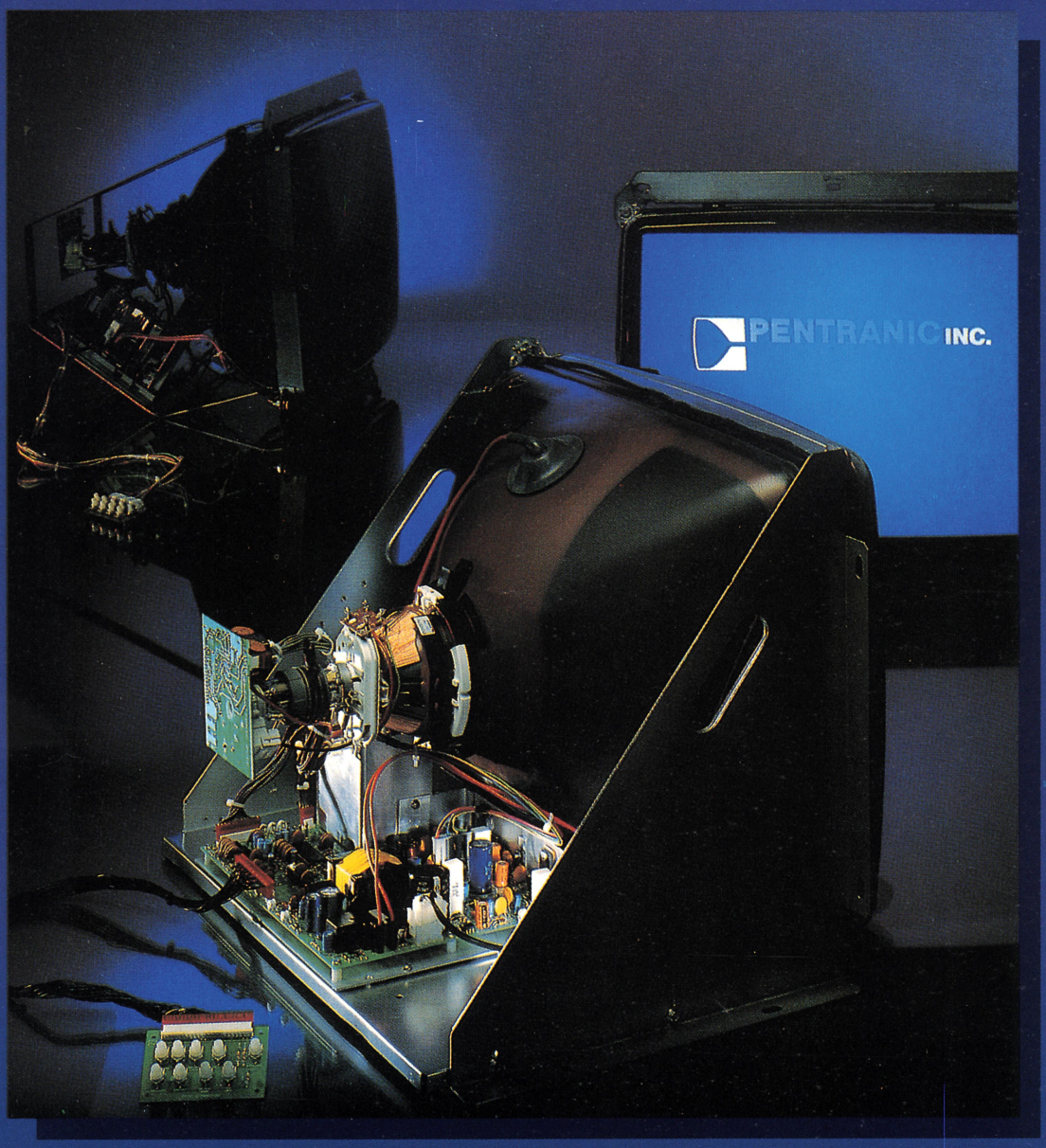

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